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# The House of Wise

By HENRY DWIGHT SEDGWICK

## ILLUSTRATED

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**FIRST EDITION**

**Printed in the United States of America**

*To*

JOHN TEMPLETON BOWEN

*in Token of*

*a Friendship of Fifty Years*



*Ἄρ οὖν οὐχ ἀμαρτάνουσιν  
οἱ ἄνθρωποι περὶ τοῦτο ὥστε  
δοκεῖν αὐτοῖς πολλοὺς μὲν  
χρηστοὺς εἶναι μὴ δυτας,  
πολλοὺς δὲ τούναντίον;*

Yes, but do not persons often  
err about good and evil?  
Many who are not good seem  
to be so, and conversely.

—Plato's *Republic*  
(Jowett Translation)



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**THE HOUSE OF GUISE**



## CHAPTER I

### CLAUDE DE GUISE

IF a traveller follows the left bank of the river Marne upstream through the province of Champagne, past Châlons, Vitry-le-François and Saint-Dizier, he will come to the town of Joinville, a little this side of the border of Lorraine. The town today has its qualities, but they are not of an adventurous or showy kind. Few tourists visit it, and they only for a brief space. But at the beginning of the sixteenth century Joinville was important as a border fortress; it possessed a great castle, and was girdled with high walls. Yet its place in history is not due to walls and castle, nor even to the presence of generations of Dukes of Guise, but to Jean, Seigneur de Joinville (1224-1319), the biographer of Saint Louis, for his book is one of the earliest French classics, and the hastiest traveller stops in the town square to inspect the little monument to his memory. Jean de Joinville loved his native town. You will remember, perhaps, how, before starting on the crusade with King Louis, he left his château, having made a vow not to return to it until he came back from Palestine, and then went upon a pilgrimage, barefoot, carrying nothing but scrip and staff, to the holy places of the neighborhood. And you remember his words: "While I was on my way to Blécourt and Saint-Urbain, I never turned my eyes towards Joinville, for fear lest my heart should become too weak because of the *beau château* that I was leaving and of my two children." It seems that the *beau château* took precedence of his children in his regrets.

The town and its château, several generations later, came by marriage into possession of the Dukes of Lorraine, for Jean's great-

granddaughter married Duke Ferry l'Audacieux and brought to her husband as her marriage portion the seigneurie of Joinville. These Dukes of Lorraine held their heads high. Though nominally feudatories of the Holy Roman Empire, they were in reality independent princes, and believed themselves as good as kings, or better, for they traced their descent to the eldest son of Charlemagne. Whatever the cause, the stock was worthy. Duke René I, *le bon Roi René*, is best remembered as a lover of the arts, as a writer of verses, which he sometimes sent to his cousin, the charming poet, Charles d'Orléans, author of the romance *Conqueste qu'un chevalier, nommé le Cuer d'amour espris, feist d'une dame appelée Doulce Mercy*. René I was not merely Duke of Lorraine, of Anjou and Provence, but also King of Naples, Sicily and Jerusalem, and these titles, however shadowy, his descendants always remembered.

His namesake, Duke René II, proved his courage and military capacity in the battles of Morat (1476) and Nancy (1477) where, with the aid of his Swiss allies, as you have read in *Anne of Geierstein*, he overthrew Charles the Bold and his Burgundian chivalry. This René had three sons, Antoine, Claude and Jean. Antoine succeeded his father as Duke of Lorraine, Claude received the French fiefs owned by his father, and Jean was given a good start on the ladder of ecclesiastical preferment. Duke Antoine belongs properly to the story of Lorraine, and not to that of the Guises, but as he was Claude's brother I will quote what Brantôme says of him, for Brantôme, *curieux admirateur de tous les egoïsmes*, as he has been called, means to tell the truth: "Since I have mentioned the *bon duc* Antoine de Lorraine, I must say a little about him. . . . He was called the *bon duc* because he was a very upright man, a prince of conscience and honor. I have seen his picture in Lorraine; and there is not a respectable house in Nancy that does not have one, people like so much to look at it. And all these fine qualities I speak of showed themselves in his handsome, honorable face. Louis XII and François I were very fond of him. King Louis gave

him the command of an hundred men-at-arms, and asked him to take M. de Bayard as his lieutenant. I leave you to guess if he refused to take so brave an officer as his second in command, especially upon such nomination."

Antoine's brother Claude, Comte de Guise, is the first important person in my story, and I proceed to him. He was born on October 20, 1496, and was brought up by his mother, Philippa of Gueldres, *en l'amour et crainte de dieu*. The phrase is not meaningless; the Guises were all bred in the love and fear of God, as taught by the Holy Catholic Church, Apostolic and Roman, and during the commotion of the Reformation they always remained loyal, more than that, devoted, to the Mother Church. Their feeling was one of passionate spiritual patriotism. As Claude was destined to receive the French fiefs belonging to his father, he was sent at the age of nine to the French court, and became a French citizen. Here he made great friends with his second cousin François de Valois, Comte d'Angoulême, a lad a little older than himself, and heir presumptive to the crown of France. Claude de Guise grew to be a tall handsome youth, with blue eyes and fair hair, intelligent, sensible, simple in his ways, composed in manner, agreeable—*aussy tost veu aussy tost plust*—and friendly, and yet with an inclination towards the magnificent, a characteristic that was inherited by his famous son François and his grandson Henri, and proper enough in men who claimed that the blood of Charlemagne ran in their veins. At the French court his boyish years passed unnoticed by history until he was seventeen, and then, apparently through the instrumentality of François d'Angoulême, he made the acquaintance of Antoinette de Bourbon—*aussy tost veu aussy tost plust*. François had been recently betrothed to Claude de France, eldest daughter of the King, Louis XII, and his wife Anne de Bretagne, and now lent his friend a helping hand. Guise's father was dead, his mother was very much given to the Church and spiritual interests; and François as heir apparent and a friend seems to have made the match. Antoinette was not hand-

some, nor was she rich, but the House of Bourbon was next in rank to the House of Valois, the Bourbons being descended from a younger son of Saint Louis. Their marriage was celebrated at the end of June, 1513.

Within two years Louis XII died, and François Premier came, in all the exultation of triumphant youth, to the throne. In his earlier years he was a charming person, a child of Euphrosyne. I will let Brantôme describe him. Brantôme says: "It is now time to speak of the great King François. The epithet *great* has been given him, not so much for his height and big, handsome body, or for his majestic presence, as for the greatness of his virtues, for his valor, his noble deeds and high desert, just as it was given long ago to Alexander, to Pompey, and others." The biographer honorably admits that he has happened to see it said in a book that the King was "truly great in that he had great virtues, and great vices also." But from this qualification he dissents, and for justification says: "François was always a *très bon chrestien*, (he never swore except by *foy de gentilhomme*) and a *très bon catholique*. He never deviated from faith in the Holy Catholic Religion, never fell into the Lutheran heresy, and, though new things are pleasing, that new thing never pleased him, he never approved of it. He said it tended to the total subversion of all monarchy, human and divine. He served the Holy Catholic Church, Apostolic and Roman, with devout reverence, free from bigotry and hypocrisy." Then Brantôme praises him for secular reasons: "Among the noble virtues that the King possessed is that he was a great lover of good literature, and of the most learned men in the kingdom; he used to converse with them on all sorts of abstruse matters, when for the most part he proposed the subject of conversation.... In this manner, the King's table was a true school, for at it all sorts of matters were discussed, whether of war or of the sciences, whether important or trivial. He was called the father and true restorer of arts and letters." And then Brantôme praises his love of building: "*Quelz bastimens et superbes édifices a-il fait construire!* What a

building is Fontainebleau, that from the desert it was, has become the handsomest house in Christendom. . . . What can one say of Chambord, which, though it is but half finished, puts all who see it beside themselves with wonder!"

Brantôme, who was born a dozen years before François I died, had no doubt talked with everyone he could that had seen the King, or heard tell of him. But, on the whole, history today does not think so well of the King as Brantôme did. François, scholars say, had neither a strong character nor brilliant talents, he was egotistical, and too much under the influence of women. In person he was not only tall, strong, and well made, but also of truly royal presence. An Italian remarked that in any company, however he might be dressed, he would be recognized as King. He had a marked gift for conversation, as well as an attractive boyish confidence that he would please; and he did please, women in particular, but all too soon he dropped into fatuous self-complacency and believed that he possessed superiorities over other men that he did not possess. He was ambitious and personally brave, but irresolute, fickle, untrustworthy, prodigal and disinclined to hard work for any length of time, and he loved to pose. He was a spoiled child. His mother, and his sister Marguerite, two years older than he, adored him. He really loved nobody but himself, and did whatever his mistresses wished, first the Countess of Chateaubriant and later Anne de Pisselieu, Mme d'Étampes. His best trait is that he was (so it is said) an artist to the tips of his fingers; he delighted in beauty, in the arts and in all the sumptuous elegance of royal luxury.

Such was the man whom it was necessary for Claude de Guise to please and satisfy in order to make the place for himself that his ambitions demanded; and Claude was ambitious—the name Guise may be almost taken as a synonym for ambition. A military career was the only one open to a nobleman, and success in it demanded experience, courage and skill. At eighteen Claude had had no experience, but courage he possessed in plenty, and he was soon

to have an opportunity to show his mettle and acquire what skill his talents would permit. The young King, full of self-confidence and thirsting for glory, believed that he had ancestral titles to great parts of Italy, and set out at the head of the nobility of France to assert them. He crossed the Alps, but found his way to Milan barred by a Swiss army. Ever since the overthrow of Charles the Bold the Swiss had had the reputation of being invincible. The French army met them at Marignano. The Constable Charles de Bourbon, a cousin of Antoinette's, led the van; the Duke of Gueldres, brother to Claude's mother, commanded a body of lansquenets, German mercenaries, and Claude served under him; his brother Antoine, Duke of Lorraine, himself but twenty-one, attended the King.

On the eve of battle the Duke of Gueldres was suddenly called home to defend his own duchy from attack, and his command was entrusted to Claude. This is the first instance of Claude's luck. The battle lasted for two days. *Pugnatum est acriter*, as Caesar would have said. The Switzers maintained their great reputation, and the French fought with all their native fire and dash. Claude de Guise displayed a *vaillance et bontez admirables*; he was shot in the arm, in the thigh—some say he received twenty wounds—his horse was killed under him, and he was left for dead. Searchers for his body found him alive, and by what was regarded as a miracle of surgery his wounds were healed, and within a month he accompanied the King on his triumphal entry into Milan, as Captain-General of the lansquenets, attended by four officers, all five of them dressed in white velvet and cloth of gold. The Guises always had a sentiment that the outside should show the magnificent qualities within. Claude was soon afterwards presented to Pope Leo X at Bologna. The Pope complimented him on his valor and success; he answered that "If he ever had the good fortune to draw his sword in the Church's quarrel, His Holiness would find that he was a true son of Lorraine." Here, at the age of nineteen, in his luck, his valor, his Catholicism and his dress we have the pattern of his life.

## CHAPTER II

### CLAUDE'S MILITARY CAREER

THE victors went home rejoicing. The King, young, handsome, gay, confirmed in his exuberant self-confidence, was a hero in his own eyes, in those of his mother, Louise of Savoy, and of his sister Marguerite, *la Marguerite des Marguerites*, the pearl of pearls, and also in the eyes of the nation. He found Mme de Chateaubriant very charming, appointed her three incompetent brothers, Lautrec, Lescun, and Lesparre, to high military positions, at great cost to the fortunes of France, and then gave himself up to the business of extracting from life all the pleasure he could. Architecture was for a time his hobby. He employed Jacques Sourdeau to plan, under his own supervision, the west wing of the château at Blois, with its nonpareil staircase, and (January, 1519) began to build the Château of Chambord, hobnobbing with his architects, Denis Sourdeau, Pierre Neveu and Jacques Coqueau. But François was a restless fellow, and pleasure always seemed to lie in some other place—*Où est le bonheur? Là-bas! là-bas!*—and he hurried away in pursuit.

His gallant young comrade, Claude de Guise, decorated with scars and laurels, went home to Joinville, to see his wife and his little baby girl, Marie, who was destined to become the wife of King James V of Scotland and transmit the Guise blood, the blood of Charlemagne, to Kings of England and of Great Britain, and to Emperors of India. But as yet Claude did not have a right to the possession of Joinville, for the town and castle had been included in the provision made for his mother, Philippa, the dowager Duchess of Lorraine. However, in December, 1519, the old lady called her children to join her at Pont-à-Mousson, a town northeast

of Joinville on the way to Metz. They obeyed, and found her in a nunnery of Sainte-Claire. At every turn in the story of the Guises we meet the profound devotion of this family to the Church. In this nunnery the old lady announced to her children that, having spent the summer of her life in the service of the world, she intended to spend the autumn thereof in the service of God. So, she bade them a solemn goodbye. "Farewell, farewell," she said; "if my poor blessing is of any avail, I give it to you with all my heart, and I conjure you to live and die in the faith of the Holy Catholic Church, Apostolic and Roman, as all your ancestors have done, and particularly the late King René of glorious memory, your lord and father. . . . You have the honor to yield precedence to very few families in Europe; never give precedence, in whatsoever it may be, to anyone in serving the glory of God." It almost seems as if she had heard what Martin Luther had just been doing in Wittenberg. She then renounced her temporal possessions, and, refusing all privileges due to rank or age, entered into her novitiate. Her son Jean, now Cardinal of Lorraine, tried to persuade her to accept some physical comforts, but she refused. And so the Château of Joinville passed at once into the possession of Claude and Antoinette.

The little town, lying on the left bank of the Marne, covered the lower slopes of the hill that mounts, gently at first, above the river; behind the town the hill becomes very steep and on the top, at a distance of five hundred yards or more, stood the great castle, with keep, bastions, towers, curtains and all the panoply of mediaeval military masonry. Of this nothing remains today. Walls encircled the town and extended back to meet the fortifications of the castle, while between the town and the castle vineyards spread over the steep slope. The total length of the castle, from the main gate at the north to the bastion at the southwest, was some three hundred yards long. As you looked up from the town you saw to the right the spire and roof of Saint-Laurent, the castle church, then, going left, the great keep, the clock tower, the alarm turret,

and so on, all rising high above the encircling walls. The castle proper, a building one hundred and fifty yards long by sixty wide, was connected with the church by a gallery. Under the castle roof were the apartments for the family, the retainers and servants, a guard room, a powder magazine, offices and kitchens, while outside was a garden, a tennis court, and suchlike. Below the castle, but within the walls, there was a large terrace, while behind the castle lay a great forest, with foliage so thick that the sun's rays could not pierce it. This forest abounded in game (fallow deer, wild boar, the roebuck) and through it the family had cut roads, for they were great huntsmen, and here and there, in various places, built little pavilions to serve as meeting places for the hunt. It happened that the poet Remy Belleau (1528-1577) one of the *Pléiade* and a close friend of Ronsard's, stayed there a generation later, when Antoinette was a widow, to be tutor to one of Claude's grandsons, and he has left a description of the place. He was very happy there. He begins by praising the view to the west, over hills, rivers, brooks, fields, châteaux, villages and woods; then he praises the vineyards that supplied the castle with *vin clairet*, especially at that time of year when, as he says, the vines begin to disclose their little buds and poke their fresh tendrils, twisted like snails' horns, out from among the young leaves. His encomiums then fall upon the château itself, the galleries, the colonnade, the furnishings, tapestries and so forth.

But this description, so far as it concerns the interior of the castle, belongs to a generation later. At the time Claude and Antoinette took possession, soon after the birth of their eldest son François on February 16, 1519, the castle was still in its mediaeval condition. It had not been lived in for fifteen years, and no end of changes were necessary to make the rooms habitable according to new notions of comfort. The nobles of France had been to Italy, they had enjoyed Italian civilization, they had learned how pleasant it is to have large windows and sunlight in palaces instead of gloom and *meutrières*, to have gardens, and goodly walks, and

to live as if peace and friendliness might last for a season. When they came home and found their castles like prisons, they at once set about modern alterations. The loopholes in the towers were broken wide and large rectangular windows put in their place; other windows were opened in the curtain walls, and dormers in the steep roofs. You can see just how they did it if you will go to the Château du Lude in Sarthe. All the nobles did it. The Sieur de Ronsard, father of the poet, made over his château, La Poissonnière (near Vendôme), and the Guises did the same at Joinville. Italian architects and builders had come and were all the fashion, but they made no radical changes except in letting in light and air. The French taste for high-pitched roofs, for galleries and gables, maintained itself. Carpenters and masons must have been very busy at Joinville for some time, but Claude could not stay to attend to the alterations, for he was obliged (most willingly) to join the army. Antoinette was left, with her two babies, Marie and François, in charge of the works, with all the cares of a châtelaine of a great domain. She led a very busy, and a very dull, life, commencing with artisans, tenants, municipal officers and the wives of the lesser nobility of the neighborhood.

War had been declared. The diplomats considered it, as is their way, inevitable. Charles V, King of Spain, had been elected Emperor over François, his unsuccessful and humiliated competitor, and his domains almost encircled France, except for the sea. Charles claimed Burgundy, his ancestral duchy, gobbled up by Louis XI, and both claimed the duchy of Milan and the Kingdom of Naples. To have maintained peace, would have required self-restraint and interest in the welfare of the poor, and François had no self-restraint, and never thought of the welfare of the poor. The war lasted with intervals—flashes of peace—throughout his reign, and longer. The French had several frontiers to protect, and Claude de Guise was sent to serve under Admiral Bonivet, in the southwest, on the Spanish border. He was in command of a body of lansquenets, twenty-five hundred strong, and a thousand



Claude de Guise



French, all infantry. Their objective was Fuenterrabia, a fortress just across the Spanish frontier at the apex of the angle made by the coasts of Spain and France in the Bay of Biscay, near where the little river Bidassoa constitutes the boundary between the two countries. The Spanish army was encamped on the further side. (I quote from the *Mémoires* of Martin Du Bellay, uncle of the poet Joachim Du Bellay, another of the Pléiade, a friend of Ronsard and Belleau). The French army, drawn up in battle array, waited all night for the tide to ebb and enable them to ford the river, but the moon was at the full, and the water too high. The next morning by eight o'clock the tide had ebbed. The Seigneur de Guise issued his orders. The lansquenets, according to their custom on going into battle, kissed the ground, and Guise, pike in hand, stepped first into the water. His soldiers followed him so impetuously that the Spaniards, though about equal in numbers (with the advantage, as Du Bellay points out, which those who stand on solid land have over men who come on, wading through a river), "bewildered by the fury and hardihood of our men, took to their heels and fled to the mountains."

Fuenterrabia soon capitulated. Claude de Guise gained great commendation for his gallantry. He was very brave, and he also possessed the trait that Cardinal Mazarin valued in a soldier, he was *heureux*, he was lucky. The reason of the easy victory at the Bidassoa was that there had recently been a great revolt in Spain of several cities against the nobles, and owing to this civil war the government had not been able to oppose the French with well-disciplined troops. Guise did not know this, and he was just as brave in crossing the river as if he had been confronted by all the chivalry of Castile and Leon, but he was lucky in that he was not. This luck of his became recognized. The Queen Mother, Louise of Savoy, wrote a letter of congratulation to Antoinette on her husband's success. She said: "*Vous avez un mari le plus vaillant et le plus heureux qui soit aujourd'hui*, you have the bravest and luckiest husband living." His success was all the more conspicuous because

the French armies to the east and north had fared badly. This luck followed him through life with few exceptions. Long years afterwards when Guise, as Governor of Champagne, was sent to protect the northeast frontier, the King said he felt assured in that quarter as Guise was *heureux et généreux*, lucky and gallant.

After the Spanish campaign, Claude was sent north to oppose the English, who threatened to come down from Calais, for Henry VIII had made common cause with the Emperor, and to prevent an invasion of the Imperialists from Flanders. Guise was lucky again, deservedly so. He cut a detachment of English to pieces near Hesdin, and routed the Germans at Neufchâteau. Paris had been frightened, and Guise's successes won him golden opinions there, and laid the foundation of his family's Parisian popularity, which rose high in the second generation, and almost to idolatry in the third.

Soon after this came the crushing French defeat at Pavia (February 25, 1525), in which François was captured. The King wrote his mother: "Madame, to let you know what is left from my ill fortune, nothing remains except my honor and my life, which are safe." She answered: "Monseigneur, I cannot begin my letter better than by praising Our Lord for that it has pleased Him to preserve your honor, your life and your health." Apart from these letters the whole affair was a bad business. Great numbers of the French nobles were killed or captured. That Guise was not in the battle was another instance of his luck. And here is still another. The duchy of Lorraine was in danger. A horde of German Anabaptists, said to number forty thousand, "fanatical partisans of absolute equality and of the violent abolition of all social rank" (as the conservative M. de Bouillé puts it), guided by a divine revelation made to themselves, had ravaged Franconia and Swabia, and were marching westward to cross the Rhine and invade Lorraine, destroying the property of nobles and gentry as they went. Their proclamations that the time had come for establishing the reign of justice on earth frightened the proprietary classes out of their boots. The Duke of Lorraine begged Claude to come to

his help. Claude was Governor of the province of Champagne and responsible for its safety. The King was a prisoner in Madrid, and the Queen Mother, acting as regent, said it was his duty to stay and protect France. Nevertheless Claude went. His excuse was that an offensive is often the best defence, and that it would be better to beat back the enemy before they crossed the French boundary than after. The brothers got together ten thousand men, horse and foot, and marched to meet the Anabaptists.

They stopped on their way to take leave of their mother, Philippa, in her nunnery. This was their first personal acquaintance with Protestants, and Philippa's blessing shows the attitude of fear and horror with which the nobles regarded them. "Children of my bowels," she cried, "you would not be the sons of our great René, nor mine, if you set more store by the world than by the Lord God, if you were to take a backward step now that occasion offers a glorious death for the sake of Him who, amid the insults of the world, died on the cross for you. . . . Hurry. . . . Strike. . . . Beat down all that oppose you. . . . Don't be afraid of being cruel; there are diseases that can be cured by gentle treatment, but this disease needs harsh treatment. Heresy is like gangrene; it always progresses unless one meets it with fire and knife. Goodbye, my children, go, fight! And I shall be at my prayers to the God of Battles."

The brothers met the Anabaptists at Saverne, a little west of Strasbourg. They sent a herald to demand surrender. The herald was murdered. A succession of little battles followed. The communists, as we should call them, were no match for the men-at-arms, who, it is said, beheld a crucifix in the sky urging them on. Thousands of the fanatics were killed, and their leader was hanged (May, 1525). The conduct of the Comte de Guise was severely criticized by the Queen's council, and had he failed his career would have been cut short, but elsewhere he won great praise. The Parlement de Paris complimented him on his immortal renown, Pope Clement VII sent his felicitations, and the King, on his return from captivity (March, 1526) when Guise went to welcome him, said that he never saw him but he had to thank him for some new

services rendered, and in recompense erected the Comté de Guise into a *duc'hé-pairie*, that is, into a dukedom that carried a peerage, for all dukes were not peers. Claude had taken a chance and he had been lucky. The King also, in order that Claude might the better be able to support his new dignity, conferred upon him various seigneuries. Another, and eloquent, tribute to the thoroughness with which Guise had put down the heretical German peasants was the epithet *Great Butcher* given him by the survivors. The conservative Catholics, on the other hand, compared him and his brothers to the Maccabees. Of this campaign one human touch has been recorded. While riding through the land ravaged by the Anabaptists, the Comte de Guise found a little deserted girl, three years old. He picked her up, held her on his horse, and carried her to his castle, where Antoinette took charge of her, kept her till she grew to womanhood, and then found her a husband.

The real importance of this episode upon the future of the Guise family was the impression that they got of Protestants. The new doctrines could not have presented themselves in a more unsympathetic aspect. A vast army of ignorant, fanatical peasants, probably accompanied by a lot of rascals, "every one that was in distress, every one that was in debt," every one that was discontented, railing at the Church, and burning, destroying, looting, gave to the Guises, as Luther had given to King François, a sense that Protestantism implied the overthrow of all human and divine government. From that time on, more and more, the Guises stand out as champions of the Church. Claude de Guise was always profoundly Catholic, as the record of his life shows, even when it might tend to his disadvantage, as, for instance, when the King made an alliance with the Turks and he opposed it, to the obvious risk of royal favor; but after this campaign all the prejudices of conservatism, of rank, property, tradition, custom, doubly strengthened and corroborated his devotion to the Holy Catholic Church, Apostolic and Roman, and he passed his convictions on to his sons.

## CHAPTER III

### LIFE AT JOINVILLE

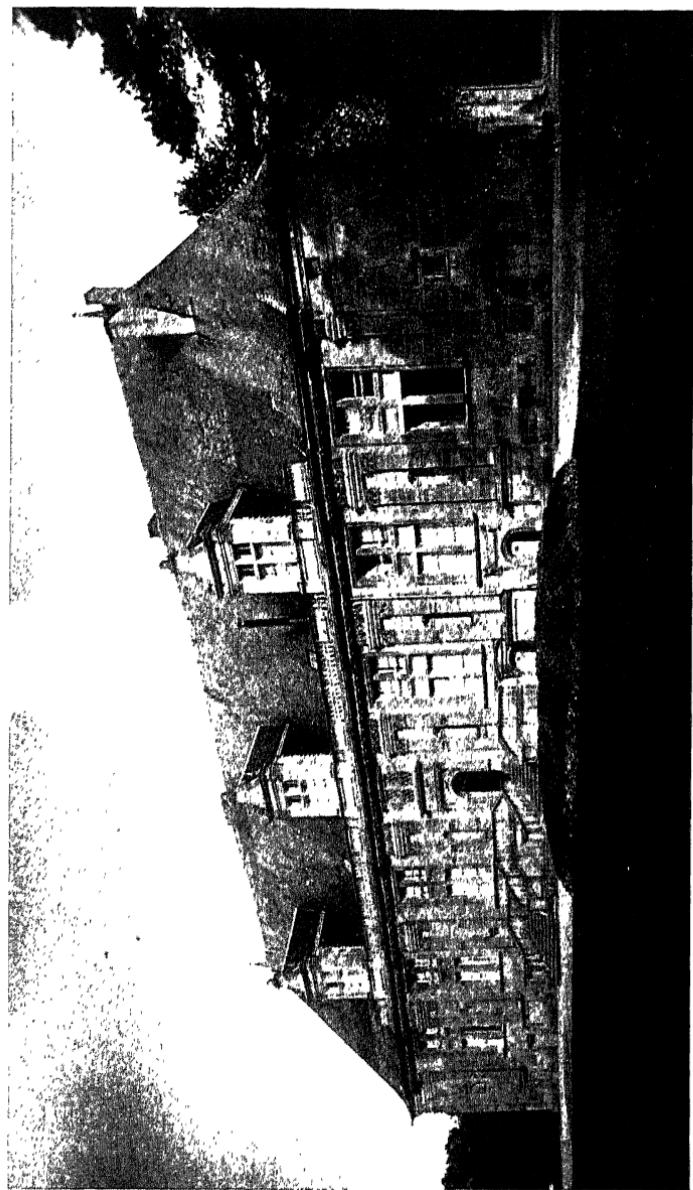
THE Duc de Guise was a *grand seigneur* of the strictest sect. In the family his father was referred to as King René, and he felt that this halo of royalty lifted him above French dukes not of the royal blood, and he was certainly second cousin to the King of France. The Castle of Joinville was worthy of his rank. He, however, could not be there very much of his time, for war or military duties called him elsewhere. Antoinette was virtually always there. The household was on a grand scale. In the kitchen there were two *maitres-gueux*, one *saucier*, one *potagier*, one pastry-cook. In the pantry, the pantler had three assistants. In the butler's pantry there were three butlers and one assistant who took charge of the wine. There was an *écuyer de cuisine*, a *huissier de sale*, *huissier de chambre*, *valets de chambre*, pages, quartermasters, purveyors, who looked after wood, charcoal, kindling. This household was presided over by *maitres d'hôtel*, who were men of good birth, and superintended the running of the castle. Nevertheless, in spite of this large scale, everything was done "*dans l'honneur et la modération*." The Duke was a true aristocrat, and except for his own apparel cared little for show or luxurious ways. Here for instance is the bill of fare for a fast day: *omelette aux fines herbes*, fish, trout *pâté*, *petits pois*, beans, cakes, cheese, strawberries, desert, *vin d'Annonville*.

As I say, the Duke cared about dress. He was a tall, dignified, handsome man, and may well have been a little vain. There is a description of what he wore on days of great ceremony, as on the occasion of a visit from the King. He put on a rich shirt of linen, beautifully worked, a *pourpoint* of gray satin, *chausse d'estamet* of

the same color, a little *saie* of scarlet satin, figured, with long sleeves, a cape of gold cloth, diapered and fringed, hanging down to his knees, with sleeves to the elbow, boots of gold cloth with facings of figured scarlet satin, and over all the great ducal cloak, appropriate to a peer of France, of *cramoisie violet*, with a long train and trimmed with ermine. This cloak was caught up on the left arm, and clasped by a gold buckle set with precious stones; it was studded with crosses of Jerusalem made of stiff gold cloth, and with heraldic eaglets, of similar silver cloth, to show the family claim to the Kingdom of Jerusalem and their kinship with Lorraine. He wore chains round his neck, and on his head a bonnet of scarlet satin with a jewelled coronet, and on his hands gloves and rings. With all their masculine vigour, these handsome Guises liked the trappings of rank.

Claude was very fond of hunting and still more of hawking; the Huguenots used to call his sons the Falconer's children. He held the office of *Grand Veneur*, Lord High Huntsman, to the King. His stables were on a scale adequate to this office. In them were a *cheval de secours*, his battle charger, his parade horse, to ride on by the King's side, six war horses, and so on, in all a hundred, or a hundred and twenty, riding horses. It was his ambition to have the finest stables in the world. For hunting he preferred little geldings with ears clipped and tails docked. To care for the stables there were squires, grooms, muleteers, lackeys, carters and two *chevaucheurs d'écurie*.

The Duke had little time for literature, but he was fond of music, and you may judge his taste in architecture by the Château du Grand Jardin at Joinville. As I have said, the Italian architects and artisans who had come back from Italy with Charles VIII or Louis XII, or had been invited by François Premier, did not make such great changes in French architecture as one would have expected in view of the immense admiration the French invaders entertained for Italian civilization. They introduced the rythmical sequence of pilasters and bays, and a great variety of ornament in low



The Château du Jardin at Joinville (façade)

(M. *Emile Humbot*)



relief, arabesques, garlands, medallions and such, but they did not affect the French fashion of towers, *tours* or *tourelles*, of high-pitched roofs and great chimney stacks. The Duke of Guise does not seem to have begun the Château du Jardin before 1539, and it was finished by 1545. He must have been well acquainted with the famous châteaux of the Loire, Chambord, Chenonceaux, Azay-le-Rideau, built in his youth, and he adopted, though in simpler fashion, several of their gay and charming features, the superposition of windows (flanked by pilasters one above the other, the top being a dormer window), and their general scheme of ornament. Fontainebleau, which was building at this very time, was too grand to serve as a model, even if he admired it, and I imagine he did not.

The Château du Jardin is half a mile from the great castle, and lies in the plain, not far from the river. It is a charming rectangular building, forty-nine metres long, and thirteen broad, and about ten in height to the cornice, and a tall steep roof above. The façade has a round topped door in the centre, and on either side, in perfect balance, a sequence of double pilasters, with architrave, then the row of superimposed windows with a dormer above in the roof, all very restrained and elegant. M. Émile Humblot, the historian of Joinville, in his book *Le Château du Jardin* which unhappily is out of print, says that a good many slight changes have been made since Claude's day. Then there was no balustrade above the cornice, and the dormer windows were simpler, less ornate, and there was only a single stairway to the front door, whereas now there is a double horseshoe stair. There was in former days a moat, and apparently a pond that bordered the château on one end and partly at the back. There were also, M. Humblot says, detached towers at the four angles; these are completely gone. Within, there was a chapel to the right, a great hall in the middle and a *salle des gardes* and an antechamber, on the main floor; below there were cellars and above rooms for servants. The charm of the château lies in the front and back; the pilasters, the bays and windows are in admirable taste, and the ornamentation belongs to the best of that gay,

elegant period, for frivolity has been avoided, and grace, serenity, and dignity take its place. The decorations are in low relief; you find angels' heads, flowers, fruits, heraldic devices of the Guise and Bourbon families, the double cross of Jerusalem and Lorraine, and also, frequently repeated, the initials *C* and *A*, and cartouches with *Toutes pour une* and *une pour toutes*.

It is not known why, with his great castle on the hill, he built this château; perhaps he thought it might be agreeable for a married son. There is a legend, based, I imagine, on the mottoes and on the portrait of the Duchess of Guise—nevertheless, it is quite fantastic—which tells that the Duke was in love with a village girl, that the Duchess discovered her living in the simplest way, and thereupon decked the poor house with tapestries, ornaments, furniture, fit for a palace. She made no other comment, and the Duke in gratitude built this château for her. The Duke may very likely have been in love with a village girl, or, some say, the daughter of a judge or some such person, but he was far from being a profligate. He did not live at court, probably because of a certain severity in his character, and never resumed his boyish intimacy with the King, though they were always on good terms. It is recorded that, at one of the meetings between François Premier and Henry VIII at Boulogne (1532), both the Duke and his brother Jean, the Cardinal, played tennis with the English King and won £46.13<sup>s</sup>.4<sup>d</sup>, and the Cardinal won again at dice. But Mine d'Étampes was the reigning favorite—*la demoiselle* (as a foreign ambassador reported) *fait tout ce qu'il lui plaît, et tout est gouverné par elle*—and the Duke was not a courtier, and did not feel at home at court. Besides, times were stirring, and as Governor of Champagne the Duke was very busy. There was either war or preparations for war almost all the time.

Antoinette lived quietly at home in the Castle of Joinville. At this time her main occupation was bearing children. She gave birth to eleven. Her eldest daughter, Marie, was born in 1515; François in February, 1519; Louise in February, 1521; Renée in September,

1522; Charles, second Cardinal of Lorraine, in February, 1525; Claude, afterwards Duc d'Aumale, in August, 1526; Louis, Cardinal de Guise, in October, 1527; Philippe in September, 1528; Pierre in April, 1530; a second François, afterwards Grand Prieur and General of the Galleys, or, as we would say, Admiral of the Mediterranean Fleet, in April, 1534; and René, Marquis d'Elbeuf, in August, 1535. Of these Philippe and Pierre died in infancy.

Hers was not a gay and could hardly have been a very happy life. One gets the impression of a lonely, narrow-minded, upright person, of character and considerable ability, whose interests were centred in her children and the Church. To those in sympathy with such a life she seemed a *vrai sacraire de bonté et d'honneur*, a holy vessel of virtue and honor. As to her bigotry, it is said that, exercising her feudal criminal jurisdiction, she caused the first Lutheran who came into Champagne to be executed, and that during a pause in the religious wars, in spite of royal amnesty, she hanged one of her vassals who had fought in the Huguenot army. I believe these to be Huguenot legends; for, on the other hand, there is a conspicuous instance of her generosity towards Lutherans. At the Battle of Dreux, in the civil wars, her son, the great Duke, François de Guise, accepted the surrender of seventeen hundred German lansquenets, Protestant mercenaries, and sent them back to Germany. They passed near Joinville on their way home, in rags, cold, hungry, miserable, accompanied, as was their custom, by their wives, a pitiable company. They were heretics and enemies, hired to put down the Holy Catholic Religion; nevertheless the Duchess gave them food and clothes, and money to the women, and an escort to conduct them safe from the resentment of the inhabitants as far as the frontier.

That was in the period of her widowhood when she ruled Joinville, as Dowager Duchess, in a strict and pious, but just and kind, fashion. Poor Remy Belleau found the castle a most peaceful and pleasant refuge. He had had his happy days at the Collège Coqueret, where, under the auspices of the old poet and scholar Dorat,

Ronsard, Du Bellay and he had formed the Pléiade, and he and Ronsard had caroused together, drinking healths to his *jeune et belle Madelon* while Ronsard celebrated Cassandre or Marie. But dark days had followed, and then through the kindness of Charles Cardinal de Lorraine he had come to be tutor to one of Antoinette's grandsons. He was very grateful. He says that Fortune and Destiny had done him the favor to bring him "to a place where I believe that Honor, Virtue, the Loves and the Graces, have resolved to bribe my senses, intoxicate my reason, and little by little steal my soul, depriving me of my senses, sight, hearing, taste and touch." And he tells how the beauty of the place, together with happiness and much leisure, and the agreeable and modest conversation of a gay and virtuous company, induced him to compose poetry again. Perhaps it was there, in the springtime, that he wrote the pretty verses:

*Avril, l'honneur et des bois  
Et des mois:  
Avril, la douce espérance  
Des fruits qui sous le coton  
Du bouton  
Nourissent leur jeune enfance.*  
  
*L'aubespine et l'aiglantin,  
Et le thym  
L'œillet, le lis et les roses  
En ceste belle saison,  
A foison  
Monstrent leurs robes écloses.*

April, honor of forest ways  
And of Spring days,  
April, sweet hope within the wildwood  
Of fruits, that in the muff  
Of budding fluff,  
Nurture their first childhood.  
  
The Thyme, the Columbine

And Eglantine  
The Iris, Lily and the Rose  
In this lovely season  
Outdoing reason  
Their finery disclose.

I doubt if the old Duchess cared for poetry, or contributed much to Belleau's gaiety, but she was always a *grande dame*, and the privilege of seeing a *grande dame* familiarly is great. On her husband's death she turned more and more to her religion. She erected a stately monument to him, according to the mode of the time, in which the effigy of a dead body lay naked below, and a clothed figure above, with statues of the four cardinal virtues, Justice, Temperance, Prudence and Fortitude, at the corners; and she provided masses for his soul, and then, perhaps thinking it more prudent not to leave the matter to her children, gave a considerable sum to the Church of Saint-Laurent for the benefit of herself, and additional moneys for services on the day of her burial, for reading psalms over her body during the space of three days, and for various other ceremonies, as well as for masses to prosper her soul in Purgatory. Brantôme says of her widowhood: "Her life was a continuous meditation on death; she had her coffin made and placed in the gallery through which she passed every time she went to divine service in the Church of Saint-Laurent so that thinking constantly upon the day of her death should refresh her."

But Remy Belleau saw the good side of her religious spirit. He says that chastity had made her home in the castle. I will quote his first impressions: "I saw a charming company of shepherdesses (the Duchess's young ladies-in-waiting) who came to bid their mistress good morning, and to accompany her to the chapel, and there say their prayers. This venerable and holy Princess is already elderly, and I don't like to see how Old Age, tremulous and crooked, has laid its hand upon so noble and virtuous a creature. . . . After the young ladies have done obeisance to their mistress, they leave her room, cross the great hall, pass the doorway and

enter a little gallery, built on purpose to lead to the chapel. I followed, and saw the noble and venerable tomb of the great knight, Claude de Guise. Below the Prince is represented as dead, but above as alive and praying by the side of this venerable lady, his faithful companion. God, of His grace, has preserved her till now, and will preserve her, if it please Him, for she is the mainstay and happiness of this region, the example and pattern of sweetness and charity, the reliquary of virtue, the strong warder of her family, and helper of the poor."

You see, the poet could not forbear from interrupting his description of the daily routine at the castle with a eulogy of its mistress. Then he goes on. After chapel the ladies-in-waiting returned to the great hall, used as a living room, and there, as I understand it, had their breakfast at nine o'clock, and afterwards went about their various occupations till dinner, which was served at five o'clock. Sometimes the young ladies sauntered on the terrace, sometimes went for a walk in the forest, but always came back in time for dinner. At both meals there was a great variety of meats and fruits. After dinner the maidens went up to the Duchess one by one, curtseyed, and then retired to a room where they sewed, embroidered, or mended clothes for the poor. Belleau was charmed with it all, and becomes rapturous. "In this room," he says, "there is perpetual spring, with its enlivening warmth—

When the Spring her flow'rets wreathes,  
Then Love breathes  
His kindling breath upon the coals  
Of the lingering, banked-in fire,  
That winter dire  
Could not quench within our souls—

in this room there is never laziness; these shepherdesses are always at work. In it is a great bird cage, and sometimes the birds are let out to fly about the room; here a tame canary takes crumbs from one of the girls' fingers, and there a bunting mimics other birds."



*(Photograph by Giraudon)*

Antoinette de Bourbon, Duchesse de Guise



At eight o'clock all went to say good night to the Duchess, and so to bed. Naturally, poor Belleau was happy. He recited his carefree verses,

*Hâ que nous t'estimons heureuse,  
Gentille Cigalle amoureuse.*

Gentle Grasshopper, we guess  
You live in happy amorousness.

He chatted with the girls; they talked of love, of its traits, of its causes and its cure. And the great world outside, with Catholic and Huguenot murdering one another, did not for the time disturb them. The Duchess was a strict chaperone and an excellent châtelaine, and enjoyed a high reputation for piety, character and good breeding, so that parents of distinguished rank were glad to place their daughters among her maidens. The Duc de Nevers asked her to bring up his daughter; the girl was welcomed and afterwards married the Duchess's famous grandson Henri de Guise. The Duchess, also, kept up her husband's custom of receiving young men and training them to arms and military exercises. Such was the home to which her son, the great Duke François, came back from time to time, and where his brilliant son Henri passed part of his youth.

## CHAPTER IV

### JEAN, CARDINAL OF LORRAINE

THE House of Guise in its three generations, of Claude, François and Henri, follows the classical orders—Doric simplicity, Ionic elegance and the full-blown Corinthian—but the cardinals, of whom there were two in each of the earlier generations, conform to the composite type, serving, and serving very well, both God and Mammon. Jean was a couple of years younger than Claude. As his older brothers received all the secular possessions of their father, Jean was provided for in the church. At the age of three he was appointed coadjutor to the Bishop of Metz, and Bishop at the age of ten. A good beginning, and well followed up. He was amazingly fortunate, even in an age of pluralities, in collecting benefices, like a man of great affairs in our own day uniting subsidiary companies—three archbishoprics, Reims, Lyons and Narbonne; nine bishoprics, Metz, Toul, Verdun, Thérouanne, Luçon, Albi, Valence, Nantes and Agen; five abbeys, Cluny, Marmoutier, Saint-Ouen, Gorze and Fécamp; as well as sundry priories—benefices, as you see, scattered all over France. *“Grand dieul quelle charge d’âmes!”* as somebody exclaimed. “What a spiritual burden!” These revenues made him extremely rich, and he lived in great luxury and prodigality, but he was also very generous in alms-giving. In Paris, as Abbot of Cluny, he occupied the Maison de Cluny, built by his predecessor, Jacques d’Amboise, and, to crown his dignities, Pope Leo X created him Cardinal of Lorraine.

It was just at this time that Martin Luther was beginning his ecclesiastical rebellion. The Cardinal of Lorraine, inevitably, was a conservative churchman, not merely because he was a prince of

the Church and rich in its riches, but because he had been taught to love that Church from babyhood. The Church was his spiritual mother, and he resented insults and attacks upon her as if they had been directed at his own mother. Like all serious-minded prelates, he admitted that there was great need of reform, especially in the monasteries, which were in a most reprehensible condition. Brantôme says that it was the usage of monks to elect as abbot or prior the one among them that was the greatest good fellow for drinking, wenching, hunting and hawking. But the Cardinal wished the reforms to be made by the proper ecclesiastical authorities, by the bishops, by local synods, or an oecumenical council, if necessary, not by revolutionary peasants. Besides, he was a great Prince, with royal blood in his veins, and despised and disliked Luther as a peasant, and his disciples as heretics and rebels.

In France the first movements towards ecclesiastical reform were very gentle and moderate. The King himself and his sweet sister Marguerite were very sympathetic towards the reformers, but the vast majority of Frenchmen were conservative, and after the disaster at Pavia and the King's imprisonment at Madrid the attitude of the government changed. The Queen Mother, Louise of Savoy, acting as regent, was in great straits. Enemies encircled France, and she was compelled to do whatever was popular, especially in Paris; and the people of Paris, under the guidance of two very conservative bodies, the Sorbonne and the Parlement de Paris, were angered by the innovators. Hatred begat fear, and fear begat slander. All sorts of dreadful stories were told of the heretics and their ways. Oddly enough, a classical story told of the early Christians came up again, accusing the Protestants of holding secret conventicles by night, where they put out the lights and indulged in horrible debauchery. All respectable people believed these stories, and the popular mind was feverishly inflamed. Even the King, on his return from captivity, swung round to the general opinion. Royal ordinances were issued against heretics and heretical books, and a few executions took place. For instance, one

young man, a lawyer's son, spoke ill of Christ, of Our Lady and of the Saints in Paradise; he was tried and condemned, drawn in a tumbril from Notre-Dame to the Church of Sainte-Geneviève, his tongue cut out, and after strangulation he was burned. Such punishments were not at all devised against heretics; they were the ordinary punishment for serious crimes against society. The mediaeval criminal code was all of a piece, civil and ecclesiastical. The reformers were too few to act openly, but to show their rejection of Romish ways, and give as much offence as possible, they took to breaking images of the Madonna and the Saints—acts not only, according to popular belief, heinous in themselves, but also sure to bring down punishment from Heaven on everybody, the innocent as well as the guilty. The Cardinal of Lorraine was anything but a fanatic, but he had accompanied his soldier brothers on their campaign against the German Anabaptists, and no doubt had conceived a very profound aversion to all that they were and did; as a prince, as an aristocrat, as a prelate, as a Catholic, he loathed all their ways. By this time he had become a great personage in the Kingdom, more important than Claude; he was cleverer than Claude, more a man of the world, more of a courtier, more gifted in social intercourse. The King found him a *compagnon de cœur*, most capable and intelligent, appointed him one of his inner council (a very small group), commanded his company for ceremonious occasions and sent him on important embassies.

The province of Champagne was peculiarly the affair of the Guises. Claude was Governor, the Cardinal was Archbishop of Reims, or remained so until he handed the archbishopric over to his nephew Charles, and the old Duchess Antoinette was châtelaine at Joinville, and all felt themselves responsible for the souls of the people entrusted to their charge. The province was exposed to heretical influences from Lutheran Strasbourg and Calvinist Geneva, but heresy had not made much headway. A few sinners were burned in Reims in 1537, but in 1539 we find the Duke writing to the Constable, Anne de Montmorency: "As to the rumor

that this wicked sect of Lutherans exists in Champagne, I shall make inquiries, and according to what I learn, I shall so set matters right that God, the King, and all the world will be satisfied." He was faithful to the statement he had made to Pope Leo X twenty years before. The Guises became more and more staunch as all that they loved in the old religion was threatened.

Cardinal Jean sympathized with Claude's attitude, but he was a cultivated and liberal-minded man. He was also considerable of a scholar. When the Roman Church was engaged in a controversy with the Greek Church as to the doctrine of transubstantiation, he was deputed to formulate the orthodox reply. He stood firm on the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas, and quoted St. Chrysostom, St. Basil, Dominus Nicolaus Cabasilas, Simeon, an ancient archbishop of Thessalonica, St. Gregory the Great, Dorotheus, Archimandrite of Palestine, and so forth. However, he was not primarily a scholar, but a child of the Renaissance; that is partly why he got on so well with the King. He interested himself in what Erasmus had written, he liked Clément Marot's poetry, though Marot was accused of heresy, and he counted Rabelais among his friends. It was the Guise interest that procured Rabelais his position as curé at Meudon. The Cardinal was considered the Mæcenas of the period, and was deluged with flowery dedications of books and poems. One of his protégés was Lazare de Baïf, a distinguished scholar, one of the eminent French humanists, and father of the poet Jean-Antoine de Baïf, a member of the Pléiade and another lover of spring:

*La froidure paresseuse  
De l'yver a fait son temps;  
Voicy la saison joyeuse  
Du délicieux printemps.*

The lazy cold of winter  
Has come and gone away;  
This is the joyous season  
Of spring so blithe and gay.

The Cardinal was so helpful that we find Erasmus writing his congratulations to Lazare de Baïf: "*Gratulor tuis studiis istum Maecenatem non minus benignum quam potentem*, I congratulate you in having a Maecenas not less benevolent, than powerful, for your studies." The Cardinal procured for Baïf the post of Ambassador to Venice, where he showed himself incompetent except in the matter of procuring lace and falcons, and in discovering Greek manuscripts. I should also except his success in making love to a Venetian lady, who became the mother of the poet.

Another distinguished humanist, Cardinal Sadolet, a friend of Bembo's and secretary to Leo X and Clement VII, is found writing to the Cardinal (1532): "Since the time I knew you in Rome, when, after some conversations with you, I could fully satisfy myself that your goodness and worth are not inferior to the nobility of your family or your high station, I have always had a very lively affection for you and have professed a particular veneration for Your Greatness." After this beginning one is not surprised to find that Cardinal Sadolet is asking the Cardinal of Lorraine to introduce his nephew to King François, and that the Cardinal received the nephew most graciously. Other letters show the Cardinal's interest in deserving scholars. Erasmus writes to him (1527): "Your generosity has laid such a heavy burden upon me that I have no idea how I shall ever pay it, even in part. I don't speak only of your truly royal present, but much more of the singular sympathy and favor you show me." But, as usual with the humanists, Erasmus's gratitude looked to the future as much as to the past. Cardinal Jean du Bellay, uncle of the poet and patron of Rabelais, wrote many Latin poems to the Cardinal, and his magnanimity and broadmindedness are shown by the distinguished but unfortunate Étienne Dolet's turning to him for help. So did another poor fellow who had been put in prison for heretical thought, Nicolas Bourbon, who addresses him as a "hero full of goodness." The celebrated poet Jean Dorat, guide, philosopher and friend to Ronsard, eulogizes the Cardinal: "From my youth, Jean, the fore-

most glory of the House of Lorraine, encouraged me and supported me in my studies." Another poet, Des Masures, in Latin verses wrote an epitaph in which he calls on Renown to carry Jean to the highest heaven. He, at least, was not looking for favors. A Greek poet, and several Italian poets, expressed eulogistic opinions of him, and the notorious Pietro Aretino says of him: "The rumour of his arrival is like the north wind that scatters the clouds; the Cardinal, among the other ambassadors, shines like the sun."

Nor were the Cardinal's tastes confined to literature. Benvenuto Cellini tells of the Cardinal's giving him a hundred gold crowns, in return for a pretty little vase; and we know that the Cardinal decorated and furnished the beautiful Maison de Cluny, which he occupied as a town house, and that he brought back from Italy as chapel master a Fleming, Jacques Arcadelt, a man praised by Rabelais. All agree in applying to him the adjectives liberal, generous, open-handed even to prodigality. At any rate, he left great debts when he died. But I have said enough to show that his intense Catholicism was due to the conservative traditions of his class and family, and not to fanaticism.

## CHAPTER V

### FRANÇOIS DE GUISE

CARDINAL DE GUISE, in spite of his dexterity, his social gifts, and of being *compagnon de cœur* to the King, somehow for a time fell out of royal favor. Perhaps it was because he agreed with prudent old Anne de Montmorency, who also lost the King's favor, that the King would do well to forego his claims upon Milan; perhaps it was because, in accordance with the practice of the times, he accepted gifts from the Emperor; or, it may have been because the King was growing old, infirm and crochety. At any rate, for the last years of the King's reign neither of the Guises was at court. Claude did not care. He was of the old type of independent feudal lord, and besides he was immensely proud and happy in his two brilliant sons, François and Charles. Charles went into the Church; but François became a soldier and from early adolescence accompanied his father on his campaigns.

François was tall and rather slender, lanky, his eyes large and blue like his father's, his face oval, his hair fair, and his complexion of olive hue, and after attaining manhood he wore a fair, thin beard. He had been brought up to arms from a child and was a great horseman. We never hear of him at court as a young man. He served with distinction under his father in various campaigns in the north. One episode is memorable. Ambroise Paré, the famous surgeon, has left an account of it. Dr. Paré says that he was with the army near Boulogne, at that time in possession of the English. "Monseigneur, the Duc de Guise [he was but Comte d'Aumale at the time], François de Lorraine, was wounded before Boulogne by the thrust of a lance, which entered above his right

eye, drove down towards the nose and issued out on the other side, between neck and ear, with such violence that the iron tip of the lance, with a bit of the wooden shaft, was broken off and remained in the wound, so that it could not be pulled out except by main force, even with a blacksmith's pincers. Nevertheless, notwithstanding the great wrench, accompanied by fracture of bones, nerves, veins, arteries and smashing and breaking other parts, the Duke, by God's grace, was cured. The Duke always went into battle with his visor up, and that is why the lance went clear through." The man who pulled out the spearhead was Dr. Regnier, a surgeon from Vendôme. And a third surgeon, Nicolle Lavernan, of very high reputation, told Brantôme that it had been necessary to put his foot on François's head in order to pull out the shaft by main strength. Such was the man's courage. From the great scar left on his face, he got his title "*le Balafré*." The King was much concerned about the wound, and made inquiries. François wrote to him: "Sire, I take the liberty of telling you that I am well, and I hope that I shall not be blind of my eye. Your very humble servant, Le Guizard." His father only rallied him, and said that men of his rank ought not to feel wounds; on the contrary "they should take pleasure in building up a reputation on the ruin of their bodies." (1545)

A few years later François de Guise married Anne d'Este, daughter of Ercole d'Este, Duke of Ferrara, and, through her mother, granddaughter of Louis XII, King of France. His brother the Cardinal Charles had arranged the match. The lady was very pretty. On her way from Ferrara to the French court she passed through Turin, and the French Commandant there wrote to her betrothed: "Godsbodikins, Mon Seigneur, you have one of the loveliest and most well-bred princesses I have ever seen. I am fearful lest God, after giving you in this world so much good fortune and joy, will punish you a little bit in the next."

And there is other testimony that the Princess "was as pretty,

wise and good as any princess in the world." Brantôme speaks of her several times. Once, he compares her with the Duchess of Lorraine: "Their beauty and charm may be said to have been equal, unless Madame de Guise had a little the advantage; and it was enough for her to surpass the other lady in those qualities, without competing in vainglory and haughtiness, for she was the sweetest, best, humblest and most affable princess that one could find, although she showed in her behaviour a proud dignity. Nature had made her so admirably, both in her tall handsome figure, and in her grave bearing and royal breeding, that any man might well be bashful and hesitate before going up to her, but having gone up to her and spoken to her, he would find nothing but sweetness, candor and pleasant friendliness, (which traits she inherited from her grandfather [Louis XII] the good father of his people) and the gracious French manner." And Brantôme speaks of her again, later in life, after M. de Guise's death and she had married the Duc de Nemours: "You still see, today, Madame de Nemours, who in her April days was the beauty of the world, make defense against the wastes of time, though he defaces all things. I can avouch, and so could they that have seen her, that in her blossoming time she was the loveliest lady in Christendom. I saw her dance one day with the Queen of Scots, the two alone together . . . and all who saw them, men and women, could not decide which was the more beautiful. Someone said, you might think the two suns met together that once, according to Pliny, had appeared to bewilder the world. Madame de Nemours, at that time Madame de Guise, had a more generous figure, and if I am permitted to say so without disrespect to the Queen of Scots, although she was not a queen and the other was, she had a more majestic appearance."

Ronsard wrote of her and her husband:

*Venus la saincte en ses grâces habite,  
Tous les Amours logent en ses regards:  
Pour ce à bon droit telle Dame mérite  
D'avoir été femme de notre Mars.*



*(Photograph by Giraudon)*

Anne d'Este, Duchesse de Guise



A saintly Venus in her beauty lies,  
And all the Loves dwell in her eyes;  
So she has every right, and more,  
To be the bride of our French God of War.

Anne d'Este was not only beautiful and charming, she was also highly cultivated. She spoke French, and I think Spanish, as well as her native Italian, and she had studied Latin and Greek. The atmosphere of the court of Este was impregnated with the enthusiasms of the Renaissance. Beatrice and Isabella d'Este had established a despotic tradition. Anne's grandmother, her father's mother, Lucrezia Borgia, a much maligned lady, received at her court the most gifted Italians of the time, Ariosto, Cardinal Bembo, Aldus Manutius, Titian, Dosso Dossi and others. Her mother, Renée of France, was a liberal-minded woman who harbored Calvin and Clément Marot when they had fled from France. Her father, Ercole II, was a patron of literature and art, her uncle Cardinal Ippolito d'Este built the famous Villa d'Este at Tivoli, and her brother Alfonso (grossly slandered by Lord Byron), who succeeded to the dukedom, was the patron of Tasso.

No doubt political considerations had their full share in the match, but the fact remains that the wife of François, and mother of Henri, was an unusually well educated woman. I dwell upon this, for there is a notion, encouraged by Macaulay's partisan phrase, "the brood of false Lorraine," that the House of Guise was a brutal family, arrogant and rude, with a taste for murder; but the truth is that, though the soldier sons in their respective generations, Claude, François and Henri, were devoted to military matters, the family had their part, not merely in the Counter Reformation—the restoration and buttressing of the old order of Christendom—but in the Renaissance, with its interest in scholarship, literature and the arts. Cardinal Jean was regarded as a Maecenas, his nephew Cardinal Charles followed his example, Claude built the charming Château du Jardin, and filled the great Castle of Joinville with furniture, tapestries and ornaments from

Flanders and Italy, and François chose his bride from one of the conspicuously cultivated families in Europe. The wedding took place on December 4, 1548, at Saint-Germain, and Claude had the satisfaction of seeing his brilliant son well and happily married before his death.

His son Charles, who was born in 1524, five years younger than François, was also on the road to great distinction. He had the family traits of a good figure and a handsome face, was extremely intelligent and very diligent. He was familiar with Greek and Latin, knew Spanish, spoke Italian fluently, and was learned in theology. He had a capacious memory, a rich, clear voice, and was a born orator. The poets compared him with Mercury the god of eloquence, and, if their evidence should be treated with circumspection, there is the weighty evidence of Théodore de Bèze, the famous Huguenot scholar, who had been to see Charles de Guise at Reims. He said: "If I had the graces of the Cardinal of Lorraine, I should hope to convert half the people in France to the religion that I professed." Charles's qualities were recognized early. Ronsard, monarch of letters at this time, wrote of him:

*Et ta vertu qui reluit  
Par les ans de ta jeunesse,  
Comme l'or sur la richesse  
Et la lune parmi la nuit.*

And through thy youthful years  
Thy virtue shed its light,  
As gold on heapéd riches shines,  
Or the moon upon the night.

Ronsard must have known him in the household of Prince Henri, subsequently King Henri II, for Charles de Guise, though younger than that Prince, had graduated so brilliantly from the Collège de Navarre that he had been made his tutor. He succeeded his uncle Jean as Archbishop of Reims, was raised to the cardinal-

ate at the age of twenty-three, and on his uncle's death became Cardinal of Lorraine. As priest his ecclesiastical behaviour was exemplary; he lived simply, kept neither hawks nor hounds, said mass frequently, stood up to say grace before dinner and supper, and was always zealous in his opposition to the Lutheran heresy.

At the time of François Premier's death (1547), the second generation of the House of Guise was growing in promise and power, worthy to take the place of the first. For some reason, as I have said, François Premier had suffered Claude to stay in Champagne and Jean to attend to ecclesiastical duties at Reims or Rome, during the last few years of his life, but with the new King, Henri II, the royal favor shone resplendent upon the House. François Premier had never admitted but one Guise, Cardinal Jean, into his inner *Conseil*, his cabinet, but Henri admitted three: Jean, Cardinal de Lorraine; François, still Comte d'Aumale; and young Charles, Archbishop of Reims. The other members were the King of Navarre (Antoine de Bourbon, first Prince of the Blood), the Constable Anne de Montmorency, the Chancellor Duprat, the President du Parlement Bertrand, M. de Villeroy, Messieurs de Saint-André, father and son, and two others, thirteen in all.

With his family established so high among the greatest French nobility, Duke Claude could leave the checkered scene in the full glow of family pride. He died on April 12, 1550. He had been with the Court at Fontainebleau when he was suddenly taken very ill. As soon as possible he was carried to Joinville. For some reason, unknown to us, he believed that he had been poisoned. He said: "I do not know whether he that gave me the mouthful to kill me is in high station or low, but if he were here in this room and I knew his name, I should neither name him nor accuse him; rather I would pray for him and do good to him, and forgive him for my death with as much fervor as I pray to my Saviour to forgive me my own sins." This poisoning was believed in by the priest who delivered his funeral oration, but it seems very doubtful. However, his words show that he died in a Christian spirit. "Please God,"

he said, "I am leaving to go to join Him and His Saints." The funeral sermon did justice to his memory: "What a loss we suffer, to see plucked in this manner from the apple tree of true princes (planted in this garden of lilies, the Christian Kingdom of France), a fruit that would have been still able to live on in strength and virtue." The King wrote to Duke François, "I hear of the death of my late cousin your father with unbelievable regret." And Marie, the Queen of Scotland, the eldest daughter, wrote: "I have lost the best father that a child ever had."

At the time of Claude's death his brother Jean, Cardinal de Lorraine, was in Rome taking part in a papal election, and he had hardly got home and heard the news "*certes pitoyables et lamentables*" when he died himself, of apoplexy. Brantôme, who was a great admirer of the family, says that Jean's heart was as noble and generous, and his soul as honest and sincere, as any of them. Henri II had named him his candidate of first choice in the last papal election.

And so the first generation of the House of Guise made place for the second, and François, *le Balafré*, became Duke in his father's stead.

## CHAPTER VI

### ANNE DE MONTMORENCY

FRANÇOIS I died in 1547, as I have said, and Duke Claude and Cardinal Jean followed him to the grave within three years. New powers rose on the horizon, and it was necessary for the second generation of Guises to set their course by new stars. The King was absolute, or nearly so, and his character and disposition became of the first importance.

Fathers and their sons often fail to understand and sympathize with one another. It was so with François Premier and Henri II; their dispositions were different, their tastes, except for hunting, different, and the ladies in whom they were chiefly interested were antagonistic to one another. And how could a son be fond of a father who, to free himself from a Spanish prison, had put the son in his place there for four years? So, naturally, though the son took reverential pains to erect a mighty marble monument to his father in Saint-Denis, he opened the door to his father's friends and ushered them out, and ushered in his own.

Henry, himself, was not a bad fellow. One of the clever Venetian ambassadors, Lorenzo Contarini, has left a full description of him in a report to his government a few years after the King's accession:

“Henri is thirty-two years old, and eight or nine months; he is tall and proportionally big, and very well made in every part. He has black hair, a fine brow, dark expressive eyes, a large nose, mouth of medium size, and a pointed beard two inches long. All this makes a pleasant face, and not lacking in royal dignity. He is physically very strong and greatly given to bodily exercises; every

day from two hours after dinner till evening he spends the time playing ball or football, or with bow and arrow, or something of the sort, and he enjoys all kinds of hunting like his father, especially chasing deer, which he does two or three times a week, riding after the deer for six or seven hours, though very exhausting. He gallops through the forest at the risk of his life, and his horse often falls under him. He gets great pleasure from weapons and horses, and rides and handles all sorts of weapons as well as any one at Court. He jousts extremely well, and there is never a tournament or joust, and they are frequent, but he appears in armour like the others, and remains with his helmet on a long time, and jousts as much or more than any of them. It is the same in all kinds of tournaments, on horse or on foot. And he always does well.♦

“As to his character, he has great natural kindness, so much so that you can’t rank any prince, no matter how far back you go in the past, above him. He wants to do good, and he does it; he is charitable, and never refuses audience to anybody. At meals there are always people about him who talk on some particular subject, while he listens or answers very politely. He is never angry, unless, sometimes, out hunting, when somebody gets in his way, and then he never uses immoderate language. For this he is dearly loved by everybody.

“He has a good mind, to judge by the experience of his reign, and he is bold in all that he does. He is temperate, he eats and drinks very moderately; and as to bodily pleasures, in comparison with his father and former kings he may be deemed very chaste. And besides that, his amorous affairs are done so quietly that nobody speaks of them, or perhaps nobody knows them, which was not King François’s habit. So, the Court that used to be licentious is now very respectable. He is very pious, never fails to be present at Mass every day, or at vespers on feast days, or at processions in certain seasons. And on every great feast day, with extreme and devout patience, he touches a great many sick people who have scrofula, which they say is cured by the King’s touch.



Henri II

*(Photograph by Giraudon)*



“He has a good memory, and speaks French, Italian and Spanish, which he learned when he was hostage for his father in Spain. In letters he can only read and write; but as to a knowledge of things in general or matters of State, he knows a great deal, and that would be more manifest than it is, if he were not different from most men, in that he thinks he knows less than he does. And the reason that he, with his good mind, does not know much more about them than his father did, is that his father did not like him, and, as long as he lived, not only never employed him, or had him interested in State affairs, but never admitted him to his Cabinet. And that is why Henri puts himself into the hands of the Constable, who has control of everything, and does everything. The Constable would like the King to remain in tutelage, and therefore urges him to physical exercises, saying that will prevent him from getting fat (which the King is afraid of), and to enjoy himself and let others do the work. Nevertheless one sees that the King acts more and more on his own responsibility every day. He is of a melancholy nature, reflects upon things, and usually spends the whole morning in listening to business of State. . . . He is truthful; it has always been his code, even before he was King, to keep his word; and the general opinion at Court, among those that know His Majesty, is that he always performs what he promises. A good many people were afraid lest the influence of the Constable, by persuading him to do a thing in one way rather than another, would end in making him break faith; but there has been no clear case of that, and one may even assert the contrary, . . . and I dare affirm that if anybody reminds the King of a promise, no matter how much the Constable or anybody else tries to dissuade him, and no matter what the consequences to himself, he will not fail to perform it utterly.”

Such was the King who chose Duke François and Cardinal Charles de Guise to be among his closest advisers. But I think the Venetian ambassador gives an unfair impression of the Constable. Anne de Montmorency was an excellent example of a narrow-

minded, bigoted, valiant old soldier, conscientious, cruel and loyal. He was of the same age as François I, and for long years a close friend. At nineteen he was present, *pour son plaisir*, at the famous battle of Ravenna, in 1512, won by Gaston de Foix against the Spaniards. At Pavia (1525), already a maréchal, he was captured with his King. He served with great distinction in campaigns against Charles V, and was made Connétable in 1538. He was a strict disciplinarian and harsh. Brantôme, who admired him greatly, says: "*Il savait bien braver et rabrouer*, you bet he could scold and browbeat.... He had seen so much, and had learned so much by experience, that when he saw anybody falter or make mistakes in his presence he knew how to talk to them and make them stand up straight. Oh, how he would dress down his officers, high and low, when they failed in their jobs, especially if they tried to justify themselves or answer back! You may rest assured that he gave them a good drink of mortification, and not only soldiers but men of every condition, president, councillors, judges, whenever anyone made a blunder." And, Brantôme did not share the general belief that Montmorency had been too cruel at Bordeaux, when the people there had revolted at a new salt tax and murdered the King's lieutenant. The rulers of the city came humbly to meet him and tendered him the keys of the city. He answered: "Get out with your keys. I don't want them. I am bringing others with me (pointing to his cannon) that will open the gates, and, I will hang you all. I'll teach you to rebel against your King and to murder his Governor." Conservative people thought that Montmorency had not been cruel enough. He was a loyal servant to his King; nevertheless he fell into disgrace (1541), and was not restored to position and influence until the accession of Henri II, who was always very fond of him, and relied greatly upon his advice.

He had the tastes of a *grand seigneur* educated at the court of François I. The Château of Écouen is one witness thereto, where the famous architect Jean Bullant, with his love of the antique

learned in Italy, aided by Jean Goujon, set the marks of his genius in a noble *ordonnance* of pavilions, bays, pilasters, windows, dormers, mouldings, chimneys, and roof. And at Chantilly he filled the Grand Château (since demolished) with *objets d'art*, and, employing Jean Bullant and Philibert Delorme, built the Petit Château, which still exists. Another aspect of the Connétable appears in the pleasure he took in the King's fool Thouy, a poor little creature, "*Si bien appris, passé, repassé, dressé, alambiqué, raffiné, et quintessencié par les nattredez, postquieres, champisseries, gallantries et friponneries de la cour, et leçons et instructions de ses gouverneurs la Farce et Guy, qu'il s'est faict appeller le premier fol du monde.*" Poor little fellow! After undergoing all that, he deserved to be reputed the first fool in the world. And the Connétable here showed his better side. He was very kind to Thouy. "He would take him to drive with him, made him sit next him in a chair or on a stool, and treated him like a little king; and if the pages or lackeys teased Thouy the least little bit, he scolded them and often had them whipped. And this Fool was so wily and sly that he sometimes complained without cause in order to have these young gallants whipped, and then he would laugh to split himself. There never was such a pretty little Fool, so funny and amusing."

That was the Connétable's pastime for facetious moments, but when he was serious "he could talk and argue well, if he wanted, as he did at times, at table or after dinner. And he loved a laugh, and would often utter *quelque bon mot joyeux.*" Brantôme tells various little anecdotes of him. For instance: "He never ate supper on Fridays, and always fasted in the evening; and, when he was at court, he never failed every night to go to see the Queen at supper time, and she at once made him sit down, and would stop talking to the others, and chat with him, sometimes softly, sometimes in a loud voice. It was pleasant to see these two chatting and listening to one another; and they often said something to make both laugh, and both knew just how to do that, and they laughed till the whole

company present laughed with them. . . . In short, this Seigneur was accomplished in all things, grave or gay. . . . He was a *chevalier d'honneur et de valeur*, and an admirable servant to the Crown of France."

This was the trouble. The Guise family, very ambitious, were already disposed to be jealous of the Constable's dominating influence over the King, and, being a very united family, each was thinking how all or any one of them could benefit one another. Cardinal Charles, very clever and a very agreeable man of the world, followed, as I have said, in his uncle Jean's footsteps and furthered the family fortunes by forethought and diplomacy. Among his worldly friends was a very beautiful lady, of whom I shall say more hereafter, Diane de Poitiers, of very great influence with the King, who had two marriageable daughters. He, with the family's approval, arranged a match between Diane's daughter, Louise de Brézé, and his younger brother Claude (afterwards Duc d'Aumale). This was shortly after the King's accession, and not only pleased the great lady, but also her lover, the young King, who showed his satisfaction by erecting the Comté d'Aumale into a dukedom (*duc'hé-pairie*) and creating François a duke and a peer in his father's lifetime (July, 1547). But Gaspard de Coligny, when he heard of the match, sneered and said, "It did not bring the Guises much honor; it is better to have but one inch of power and favor with honor, than an ell without." The Guises retorted that Coligny spoke out of envy. Perhaps there had been a touch of envy, for Coligny and François had once been equals and now François was a duke and a peer. Anyhow, Coligny's sneer was hardly justified. The lady in question had been born of ancient lineage, in honorable wedlock; there was no stain on her name. And later, Coligny did not sneer when his cousin, the Connétable's son, François de Montmorency, was obliged by his father to marry the King's illegitimate daughter, Diana of France, or when another cousin married a granddaughter of Diane de Poitiers. Nevertheless it was true that Diane de Poitiers's favor was the broad road to promotion and success.

## CHAPTER VII

### DIANE DE POITIERS

THIS lady had an eventful history, and as a consequence her memory has had to run the gauntlet of much calumnia. Of high rank, for her father was son-in-law to Louis XI, at fifteen she married the Grand Sénéchal de Normandie, a man of fifty-five, and humpbacked. By a strange chance she was in the train of Louise de Savoy, mother of Francis I, when in 1526, on a raft in the Bidassoa, the Dauphin, aged nine, and Henri d'Orléans, his brother, aged seven, were exchanged for the King, their father. Perhaps, for she was the most beautiful of the company and the most likely to be successful, she put her arms round the little Henri and tried to comfort him, as he was sent off a captive among strangers. Four years later, the two princes were returned, and Diane was with the court that came to welcome them home. The boy must have remembered her beautiful face and form. The next year, at a tournament run in the Rue Saint-Antoine, the lad wore her colors, black and white. He wore them still, twenty-eight years afterwards, in the fatal tournament of 1559. In 1531 she became a widow, and in 1533 Prince Henry married Catherine de Médicis, niece to Pope Clement VII. Catherine was not pretty, she was a foreigner, and the marriage was considered a mésalliance. The Medici were abler, cleverer, more cultivated, more civilized, than the Valois, but they had made their way by buying and selling, by lending and borrowing, by risks to merchandise and bills of exchange, and the noblesse of the sword turned up their noses. Besides, for years she failed in her primary duty: she had no children. And all these years the tall, handsome, calm, gracious Diane

de Poitiers represented to the young Prince all he wanted in woman—sympathy with his tastes, encouragement in his deficiencies, tenderness for his loneliness, maternal qualities that he longed for more and more as life opened before him and he felt the chill of his father's indifference, the weight of his stepmother's nonentity, and the incomprehensibility (for he was not clever) of his wife's foreign, feline suppleness. Inevitably, in course of time, for he was young and she was beautiful, Nature deepened the bonds between them.

Henry as a boy had never received any love, and he needed it, he needed affection. He was fond of Anne de Montmorency, but the Constable was a rugged soldier old as his father, and a man who desired to govern the Kingdom; and, apart from him, he had no intimate men friends. He was lonely, unable to express himself, and diffident, and this beautiful lady, who had come down to meet him, a sad boy, on his return from captivity, like a goddess, meant everything to him. He was devoted to her all his life. When King, it was his custom to visit her every day after dinner, stay an hour and a half, and tell her of everything that concerned him, matters of state and of private life. She meddled very little with public business, but her power was such that it was worth while for a cadet of the House of Guise to marry her daughter. Her dominion, like her beauty, lasted in its plentitude all the King's life. She had been faithful to her old humpbacked husband—the gossip concerning François Premier and others, though some cynical-minded people believed it, did her great injustice—and now she was faithful to her young royal lover. He was generous to her, he made her the Duchess of Valentinois, and assigned to her the moneys received from all officholders for confirmation of their offices (a customary contribution on a king's accession), more than a hundred thousand crowns, but he had given almost as large a sum to each of his closest counsellors, the Constable, the Cardinal de Guise and the Maréchal de Saint-André. He also bought for her the Château of Chenonceaux, and built for her, or rather for

himself and his own pleasure, the Château d'Anet. And he ought to have been generous; for when he was Dauphin, and pinched for money, she had given him of hers, and he had taken it as a gift. Historians have a way of calling her rapacious. All she did was to take what the King gave her, as everybody else did, after the ordinary human fashion of taking what one can get. As to procuring offices and gifts for her relations, no doubt demands came to the favorite thick and fast; and she probably passed them on to the King. The whole matter of demanding favors of the governing power was very much of the same pattern that it is now; and you have only to visit Diane's house at Étampes to see with what a modest dwelling she, for a time at least, was satisfied.

As for her beauty, it seems likely that her portraits are wholly inadequate. It was not merely her name, but her form and face, that made Jean Goujon, or whoever it was, and Benvenuto Cellini depict the goddess Diana as her prototype. Her beauty must have been very dazzling in the pride of her middle life, for it was remarkable when she was old. Brantôme says: "I saw Madame la duchesse de Valentinois at the age of seventy [ten years after Henry's death, but she died at sixty-eight], as lovely of face, as fresh and as amiable as at the age of thirty.... I saw her six months before her death, still so beautiful that no heart however strong could remain unmoved, although she had at that time broken her leg in the street at Orléans. She was riding, and managing her horse with as much dexterity and agility as ever, when it slipped and fell under her. You might suppose that her beautiful face would have been changed by the fracture, and the pain she suffered. Not at all; her beauty, grace, majesty, her noble mien, remained such as they had always been. And her complexion was still very white, and with no powder or paint.... It is a pity that the earth covers that beautiful body." Diana used to dress in silk "*gentiment et pompeusement*," and always in black and white, not as widow's weeds, for such had been her custom while her husband was alive, but because the colors set off her wonderful

complexion. And she wore her gowns open at the neck, in order to show her lovely throat. She was an ardent Catholic, and no doubt was largely responsible for the King's piety.

So far as the King had any aesthetic tastes, they lay in building and in the decoration and furnishing of his palaces. Diana had similar tastes, and the united letters *H* and *D* that one sees in apartments of the Louvre, at Fontainebleau, at Blois, on Diana's house at Étampes, are symbols of this sympathy as well as of their close union. They built the château at Anet together. It was on the site of the old Brézé manor house. Diana had a sentiment about this, and wished to preserve it. Philibert Delorme, the great architect whom they employed, says that he found it very difficult to work the old building in as part of the new château. It lay near the river Eure, north of the Forêt de Dreux. A great rectangular wall, surrounded by a moat, and guarded with towers at the four corners, enclosed the château and its *jeu de paume*, its courts and its gardens. The château was built on a rectangle, enclosing the *cour d'honneur*, with three habitable sides, and for the fourth the entrance wall with its noble portal. You may see the *entrée du grand logis* in the court of the *École des Beaux Arts* in Paris, with its three orders "*dans un dessein parfait de goût et de proportions*." The portal of the entrance wall was crowned with a great clock, adorned with four hounds that bayed at a stag on the quarter-hour.

The most eminent artists worked to beautify the château. Benvenuto Cellini's disciples, or perhaps Jean Goujon himself, modelled the famous *Diana and Stag* (now in the Louvre) for a fountain. Léonard Limosin, the celebrated worker in enamel, wrought for the chapel the figures of the twelve apostles that are now to be seen in the Church of Saint-Pierre at Chartres. The whole was a great success. A traveller reported that "Nero's Golden House could not have been richer or more beautiful," and the English ambassador, who lunched there in March, 1554, and examined the furnishings carefully, says that they were "so sumptuous and royal that he had never seen the like." Diana herself

took the liveliest interest in the building. She says in a letter to Anne de Montmorency (Oct. 17, 1551): "I can't write to you of anything except my *maisons*; I don't spend an hour away from them." But, as Delorme says himself, she never interfered with his plans, though others, perhaps the King, seem to have been less forbearing.

And all the time, as the Venetian ambassador says, the tie between her and the King was kept as much as possible in the background. When he presented her with the Château de Chenonceaux, his grant reads: "Henri, by the grace of God, King of France, to all present and to come, Greeting: We here proclaim that we, considering the great and commendable services that our late cousin Louis de Brézé, grand Sénéchal de Normandie, rendered in his lifetime to the late King of virtuous memory, our very honored Lord and Father (may God assoil his soul), which are such and so notorious that everyone knows them, and which are still beneficial to us and ours, and to the state and public weal of the Kingdom . . . for these reasons we wish to render a return, so that all our good servants, and lovers of the welfare of our state, may take example and increase their loyalty and fidelity toward us, and therefore,

"We, to our very dear and beloved cousin, Diane de Poitiers, his widow, for some recompense for such services, have granted, ceded, quitclaimed and conveyed, by these presents . . . the estates of Chenonceaux and of Rosde, their houses and castle with drawbridge, granges, courts, gardens, etc., etc.

"Dated at Saint-German-en-Laye, this month of June, 1547, and the first of our reign.

"HENRY."

The next year he restored to her the lands of her father, the Sieur de Vallier, that had been confiscated by François I (for the Sieur de Vallier had been implicated in the Connétable de Bourbon's treason), and conferred on her the title of Duchesse de Valen-

tinois. At his coronation he wore a doublet adorned with three crescent moons interlaced, and two *D*'s united by an *H*. She had already, as we say, definitely arrived. The Venetian ambassador reported to his government that the King did everything she wished. Her problem—and the great tranquillity with which she faced it shows her character—was how to deal with the Queen. She did well. She never flaunted her position, she urged the King to pay his wife the attention that was her due, and, but without intermeddling, interested herself very much in the royal children, in their bringing up, in their exercises, in their ailments; and when little Mary Stuart, a child of six, heiress to the throne of Scotland, niece to the Guises, was brought to the French Court and affianced to the Dauphin, it was she that looked after her.

But the Queen—what went on in her mind and heart? Married when but a girl of fourteen, a stranger in a foreign land, looked down upon as a *parvenue*, and for ten long years a childless wife, loving her husband, and, far from beautiful herself, seeing him devoted to a beautiful woman; and hearing suggestions that for her barrenness she should be put away, and a fertile wife procured, able to produce an heir to the throne—what thoughts did she harbor day and night? She went to King François and said: “I have heard that it is Your Majesty’s intention to give my husband another wife, in order to provide for the succession to this noble Kingdom. That is quite proper, since it has not pleased God to grant me the grace of children, and Your Majesty does not wish to wait longer, and I, in return for the many favors that I have had from You, am ready to endure this great grief rather than oppose Your Majesty’s will. I will enter a nunnery, or rather, if it may please Your Majesty, remain in the service of the happy woman who shall become the wife of my husband.” She wept as she spoke, and the King replied, for he was sensitive to the emotions of others, “My daughter, be very sure that since God has willed that you should be my daughter-in-law and the wife of the Dauphin, I do not wish it to be otherwise, and perhaps it



(Courtesy Worcester Art Museum)

Diane de Poitiers

School of Fontainebleau, attributed to François Clouet



will please God to grant to you and to me that which we most desire."

François Premier never showed himself in a better light. But Catherine had to wait till January, 1544, for the birth of a son, and even after that, though several more children were born, she had to keep her heart battened down under the hatches. Her salvation lay in her own indomitable character, her supple duplicity and in her love for her husband. There is a tale that she tried to induce a nobleman to throw vitriol at Diana, but the French were ready to believe Italians concealed poison in their pockets, and such stories are not lightly to be credited. On the King's death the treatment accorded to Diana was singularly gentle—one gets the impression that all the great people liked her; she was obliged to give up her presents of jewels, to surrender Chenonceaux in exchange for Chaumont and to leave the Court. That was all.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE SIEGE OF METZ, 1552

HENRY II found the political situation very much as it had been in his father's reign. France, almost encircled by the imperial power, was always apprehensive, and war with Charles V broke out again in 1552. The French army of the northeast crossed the Meuse and captured Metz, but illness and heavy rains prevented any further advance, and the army retreated back into France. The Emperor, angry at the loss of Metz, got together a great army to recapture it, and the rumours of his preparations rumbled through Europe. The duty of taking command of the garrison fell to François de Guise, as Governor of Champagne. The Constable, as Commander-in-Chief, remained with the King. The Duke arrived in Metz on August 17, 1552, and prepared for defence.

Brantôme, who was a lad of seventeen at the time of the siege, is still all a-tingle with excitement when, in middle age, he comes to write of it: "Now, just as we admire, and praise greatly, an excellent artist who has created a masterpiece, and still more an artist who has created many masterpieces, so, in like manner, we must admire and honor this great Captain of whom we are speaking, not for one military masterpiece that he has executed, but for several. Among his masterpieces must be reckoned the defence of Metz, the Battle of Rantzau, the Italian expedition and the capture of Calais. . . . But to undertake to describe the siege in detail would be superfluous, as our historians have filled volumes with narratives of it. Nevertheless, you must consider the great army that the Emperor brought to Metz—he never collected such a multitude before or afterwards—and the weakness of the place,

for it did not have a quarter of the fortifications it has today, and you must consider the Duke's foresight in furnishing it with ammunition and provisions, in establishing rations and regulations, and preparing everything else necessary to sustain a long siege, and how little time he had to do all that before the siege began; and you must keep in mind the admirable military arrangements he made, and above all the admirable obedience rendered to him by the nobles, officers and soldiers, and by the whole city, without the slightest insubordination or the slightest ill humour; and then the gallant combats and sorties that were made. You must think of all that, and much else too long to specify, and, besides, there was the admirable gentleness and kindness that he used toward the enemy, dead, or half-dead, or dying of hunger, disease, poverty, and afflicted by all the miseries that are engendered by earth and sky. In short, whoever will reckon up all that was done in this siege, will grant that it was the most splendid defence that ever was, as I have heard famous captains, who were present at it, say, quite apart from the threatened assault that was never made, though the Emperor wanted it badly. For one day, when the enemy's signal to prepare for an assault was heard, M. de Guise made such brave preparations, and marshalled all his men, princes, lords, gentlemen, officers and soldiers, so excellently, and all manned the ramparts with such determination, ready to receive the enemy and defend a breach, that the Emperor's old and experienced captains, seeing the resolute bearing of our men, advised him to forego an assault, as it would mean the ruin of his army. The Emperor was very angry, but the danger was so obvious that he heeded their advice."

The city of Metz lies at the confluence of the Moselle and Seille, which rivers, with the aid of simple ramparts to strengthen the gates opening on bridges, defended the city to the east, north and west. But on the south there is a broad space between the rivers, and this space was protected by fortifications, and it was here the danger lay. The Duke's engineers repaired and strengthened the walls

across the gap, clearing out the moat, pulling down outlying buildings and so forth. It happens that Ambroise Paré, the famous surgeon, to whom I have already referred, has left an account of his experiences during the siege; and from these I quote:

“The Emperor, not long ago, as everybody can remember, besieged Metz with a hundred and twenty thousand men, in the middle of winter. There were six or seven thousand men in the city and seven princes, the Duc de Guise, the King’s lieutenant, MM. d’Enghien, de Condé, de Montpensier, de la Roche-sur-Yon, Monsieur de Nemours, and several other gentlemen, and a number of old officers and military men. Many sallies were made against the enemy (as I shall tell later), and many more on both sides remained upon the ground. Almost all our wounded died, and it was thought that the drugs given them were poisoned. So M. de Guise and the princes asked the King, if it were possible, to send me with drugs, for they believed that theirs were poisoned, as so few of our wounded got well. I do not believe that there was any poison; I think that the harquebuses, the sword cuts, and the bitter cold, were the causes of the deaths. The King sent word to the Maréchal de Saint-André, who was his lieutenant at Verdun, to get me into Metz, by any possible means. The Maréchal de Saint-André bribed an Italian captain, who promised to get me in (which he did, and for that he received fifteen hundred crowns). When the King heard of the promise made by the Italian captain, he had me sent for, and commanded me to take from his own apothecary Daigne whatever drugs I should think necessary for the wounded in the besieged city. I took as much as a post-horse could carry. The King also gave me letters to M. de Guise, and to the princes and captains that were in Metz.

“When I got to Verdun a few days later, Monsieur le Maréchal de Saint-André procured horses for me and for my servant, and for the Italian captain, who spoke very good German, Spanish and Walloon, besides his native tongue. When we were eight or ten leagues from Metz we travelled only by night, and when I drew

near the enemy's encampment I saw, about a league and a half away, so many fires round the town that it seemed as if all the ground were ablaze, and I thought to myself we shall never be able to pass through those fires without being discovered, and then, as a consequence, we shall be hanged, or cut to pieces, or be made to pay a great ransom. To tell the truth, I would willingly have been back in Paris, the danger looked so imminent. But God conducted our affairs so well that we entered the town at midnight, by means of a signal that my captain had contrived with a captain of M. de Guise's company. I went to see that nobleman in his bed, and he received me graciously, being delighted at my coming. I imparted to him all that the King had bidden me say; and I told him I had a little letter to give him, and that I should do so the next day without fail. That done, he bade them give me lodgings and treat me well, and said that on the morrow I must be sure to go to the breach, where I should find all the princes and lords & a number of officers. I did so. They greeted me effusively, doing me the honor to embrace me, and said I was most welcome, adding that now, if they should chance to be wounded, they had no fear of dying.

"The Prince de la Roche-sur-Yon was the first to entertain me. He inquired of me what was said about Metz at Court. I told him all he wanted to hear. Then he abruptly asked me to see one of his gentlemen, named M. de Magnane (at present Chevalier of the Order of the King and lieutenant of His Majesty's Guards), whose leg had been broken by a cannon bursting. I found this officer in bed, his leg all doubled up, with no dressing on it, because somebody had promised to heal it by taking his name and his belt and uttering certain words. The poor gentleman was weeping and moaning from the pain he suffered, and for four days he had not slept night or day. I treated these delusive promises with great scorn, promptly set the leg and dressed it, quite in the right way, so that his pain left him, and he slept all night. And since then, thanks be to God, he got well, and is at present alive

and in the King's service. Milord de la Roche-sur-Yon sent me a barrel of wine to my lodging, bigger than a cask of Anjou, and said that when that was emptied he would send another. The officers all vied with one another in providing me with good cheer.

"That done, M. de Guise gave me a list of ten captains and lords, and bade me tell them the King's instructions. That I did . . . I then asked M. de Guise what I should do with the medicines I had brought; and he told me to distribute them among the surgeons and apothecaries, and chiefly for the poor soldiers that were wounded, for there were a great many at the hospital. I did so, and I may add that it was impossible for me to visit all the wounded who sent for me to come and dress their wounds. . . .

"Our people often made sorties, by the orders of M. de Guise. The day before such a sortie, there would be so great a rush to volunteer, especially of young nobles [they were led by experienced officers] that it was deemed a great favor to let them sally forth and attack the enemy. They always went, a hundred or a hundred and twenty strong, well armed, carrying round shields, swords, harquebuses, pistols, pikes, partisans and halberds, and went as far as the trenches in order to wake the enemy up with a start. Then there would be a great alarm in the enemy's camp, their drums would beat *plan, plan, ta, ti, ta, ta, ta, ti, ta, tou, touf, touf*. And their trumpets and clarions blew great blasts, *boutte selle, boutte selle, boutte selle, monte à cheval, monte à cheval, monte à cheval, boutte selle, mont à caval, à caval*. And all their soldiers would shout *à l'arme, à l'arme, aux armes, à l'arme, aux armes*, in all sorts of languages, according to nationality, very much as hunters raise a cry after wolves. And you could see them rush out from their tents & huts, thick as ants, when an ant-hill is uncovered, to rescue their comrades, who were being slaughtered like sheep. Their cavalry, too, would come up on all sides at full speed, *patati, patata, patati, patata, pa, ta, ta, pata, ta*, eager to be in the mêlée, and bandy blows, giving and taking. Our men,

then, when they found themselves overwhelmed by numbers, would return, fighting, to the city, and then the pursuers would be driven back by our cannon, which had been loaded with pebbles and bits of iron, squared or triangular. And from the walls our soldiers rained bullets on them thick as hail, to send them back to bed, but many lay down on the battlefield. No more did our men come back with whole skins, always some remained behind to pay tithes, happy to die on the bed of honor."

Dr. Paré gives a graphic account of a ruse of the Duc de Guise, and of his careful rationing of provisions, and of an elaborate plan he made to defend every section of the city, house by house, to the last, and then to burn all their possessions, their enemies and themselves, rather than surrender. "The citizens [I quote his words] agreed to everything rather than see a bloody knife at their throats, & their wives and daughters taken by force and ravished by cruel, brutal Spaniards." The news of the French purpose to resist to the uttermost was carried to the enemy's camp; at that, the Emperor "put some water in his wine," and decided that if there were to be no booty, no prisoners, no ransoms, it was not worth while to sacrifice more men. So, much against his will, he abandoned the siege. Paré states that the enemy lost more than twenty thousand men, and adds, ending with pardonable irony: "This mortality was due chiefly to hunger, disease & cold, for the snow was more than two feet deep, and their men were lodged in caverns underground, covered only with straw. Nevertheless each soldier had his camp bed, and a canopy spangled with shining stars more brilliant than fine gold; and every day they had white sheets, and they lodged at the sign of the moon, and they made good cheer, when they had it, and they paid their host in the evening so well, that they went off quits in the morning, shaking their ears, and they needed no comb to card down the feathers from their hair and beards. And they always found the tablecloth white, and they only went without good meals, for want of food. Besides most of them had neither boots nor shoes, nor slippers,

nothing for their feet, and many preferred to have nothing, because they were up half way to the knee in mud; and because they went barefoot we used to call them the Emperor's apostles. . . .

"After the besiegers had all gone, I distributed my patients among the surgeons of the city, to finish their cure; then I took leave of M. de Guise and returned to the King, who received me kindly, and asked me how I had been able to enter his city of Metz. I told him just what I had done. He gave me two hundred crowns besides the hundred I received at starting, and told me that he would never let me be poor. I thanked him very humbly for the gift, and the honor it had pleased him to show me."

The Duke behaved with the greatest humanity to the enemy's wounded that were left behind; he had them treated by the French doctors and sent to hospitals, where possible, and he provided carts for those that could be moved (as well as for the dead) to be sent back to the Imperial army. One more anecdote concerning the Duke on this memorable siege I must not omit. Don Luis d'Avila, commander of the Emperor's light horse, owned a Turkish slave, who stole his fine Spanish jennet and escaped within the walls of Metz. Don Luis wrote to the Duke please to send back both horse and slave, for he knew that the Duke was a valiant, generous, courteous prince. The Duke restored the horse, but said, "as to sending back the slave, he could not, for his hands were tied by the privilege of France, introduced therein from time immemorial, that France, being wholly free as she has been and is, cannot receive any slave in her border; and whoever he be, even if he were the most remote alien in the world, if he had but only put his foot on the soil of France, he was immediately free and discharged of all slavery and captivity, and as much at liberty as in his own native land, and therefore, he, François de Guise, could not contravene the liberties of France."

The Duke's affability, courtesy, generosity and humanity had long made him popular with all his friends, and now the defence of Metz made him a national hero.

## CHAPTER IX

### GUISE AND MONTMORENCY

IT WAS only what Montaigne called *la courageuse espérance* that could expect great feudal nobles, but recently brought under the dominion of monarchy, to act together in self-sacrificing union for the common good. A rift between the Constable and his nephews and the proud House of Guise was inevitable. The Constable, restored to power, itched to manage the affairs of the Kingdom, and, assuming too readily the authority of age and experience, jostled the ambitions of the Guises. And, very likely, if the Guises had not been such a united family the Constable, strong in the favor of the King, might have crowded his rivals out; but the Guises found their strength in union, and they were by nature a very affectionate family.

It was Charles, the Cardinal, an amazingly clever man, that took the lead in schemes for the family advancement. He was devoted to his brother François. When François's daughter Catherine, his second child, was born (July 18, 1552), the Cardinal wrote to him: "I am perfectly delighted to hear that Madame my sister is so happily delivered. It is true that I should have been greatly pleased with a boy, but I hope you will begin again so soon that that mistake will be quickly mended, and, please God, we shall make a fine match with this girl. Even if you have been spoken to since her birth about her marriage, I have got ahead of you, for I was spoken to about it before she was born. So, if we play our part well, we shall be able to choose, and we have time enough to think it over." You see that he had his eyes towards the future, ready to make diplomacy serve family fortunes;

and in order to make diplomacy serve ambition, three chief factors were to be considered: the King, the Queen (for her abilities were beginning to be recognized, and the King was fond of her in his sluggish, unimpassioned way) and the Duchesse de Valentinois. Personal relations were of the utmost importance; the King's whim might decide a career, and the courtiers were obliged to study his tastes, his humours, his words. This task, for the Guises, fell upon the Cardinal of Lorraine. The Duc de Guise, essentially a soldier, occupied his mind with military matters, and followed the counsels of the Cardinal in questions of family policy. So did the younger brothers, Claude, later Duc d'Aumale, Louis, who went into the church and was to become Cardinal de Guise, and a second François (born in 1534), who was to become Grand Prieur and Général des Galères.

All seem, even Louis, who was inclined to conviviality, to have inherited the family beauty and attraction. Brantôme, who served under him, says that the younger François was one of the handsomest princes of the time, one of the most agreeable and accomplished, very tall and lithe, with a good figure, and an excellent horseman, and very courteous, especially in his manners to ladies. Gifted, attractive and polite, the five brothers, under the lead of the Cardinal, made the most of themselves, and quite outplayed the Constable. First came the marriage of Claude with Louise de Brézé, at which, as I have recounted, the snobbishness or envy of Coligny made a breach between him and his old friends. Two years later the little Queen of Scots, their niece, came to France and was betrothed to the young Dauphin. The Venetian ambassador reported: "The Dauphin loves her Most Serene Highness, the little Queen of Scotland, very much. She is a very pretty little girl. Sometimes, with their arms round each other's waists, they go off into a corner where no one can hear their childish secrets." This brought the Guises very close to the royal family. And then the Constable, with the density of intelligence that, it is sometimes said, marks the military mind, made a bad mistake. In the little



(Les Archives Photographiques d'Art et d'Histoire, Paris)

A Diana from the Château d'Anet



Scotch Queen's train came a young lady who caught the King's eye. The Constable encouraged the affair; he hoped to supplant Diane de Poitiers, and direct the government by means of a new royal favorite. The Queen and Diana united and drove the Scotch girl away. Diana's power remained as strong as ever; palace halls, stained glass windows, the very frame of an enamelled portrait made of her by Léonard Limosin, still display the interlaced initials *H* and *D*, and show how unassailable Diana's position was.

The old Constable, however, still kept his hold upon the King; in part because the King, half subconsciously, was a trifle suspicious of this brilliant family of Guises, who held together and possessed so many talents. A slow-minded man like the King finds himself more at home, more comfortable, with other slow-minded men, such as the Constable, than with quick-witted minds, which are oft round the corner before one has half grasped what they say. The Constable, by virtue of his office, enjoyed a handicap. He commanded the royal army, and had won some glory by the conquest of Metz, which he captured by a ruse that would be thought dishonorable except in war or love; but this glory had been wholly wiped out by the Duke's victorious defence. In popular favor, especially in Paris, the Duke had left his rival far behind. And Fortune again favored him the next year (1553), for young Montmorency, the Constable's son, surrendered the fortress of Thérouanne, in northern France, to the Imperialists. And the year after that the Battle of Renty took place, which Brantôme named as one of the Duke's great exploits.

The Constable had attempted a campaign in the northeast; he was to march on Brussels and do great things. Prince Antoine de Bourbon and the Maréchal de Saint-André were with him, and the King, in order to share in the glory, joined him, also. Guise was there, in command of nine or ten thousand men, but, in accordance with the unorganized military system, was not, apparently, under the Constable's orders. The French found them-

selves confronted by a strong Imperial army, and fell back to a small town, hardly more than a castle, Renty, on the borders of Artois, near Saint-Omer, and laid siege to it. The Imperial army came up to relieve the place. The Constable neglected to occupy the one position by which the enemy could attack with hope of success. It is hard to make out just what happened, but it seems that the Duc de Guise, having taken the precaution to reconnoitre, for he was always thorough in details, stationed his contingent so as to remedy the Constable's omission.

The next day, August 13, 1554, the Spaniards attacked; their leader, Count Wolfram von Schwartzenberg, swore he would "*passer sur le ventre à la gendarmerie françoise*," ride over the Frenchmen's bellies. The fighting was fierce. The Duke, aided by his brothers, the Duc d'Aumale and young François, led a counter attack; Coligny, colonel general of the infantry, also came up and took part. They put the enemy to rout and killed some two thousand. It was said that the Constable did not support the attack but ordered a retreat to be sounded "*par le souffle de l'envie*," out of envy. But such calumnies are easily set afoot. That night the Duke and Coligny met in the King's tent. Guise, having heard that Coligny had started a report that in the thick of battle he had not been where he should have been, said angrily: "By Christ, don't you try to take away my honor." "I don't want to," Coligny replied. "You couldn't," Guise retorted, and they laid hands on their swords. Those about intervened, and the King commanded them to embrace and be friends. But it is obvious that enmity between the two was ever ready to raise its head. After the battle, instead of pursuing the defeated enemy, the Constable, always very prudent, at his best a sort of Fabius Cunctator, retreated, and Renty remained in the enemy's hands. The Venetian ambassador reported to his government: "The fault of these failures lies with the Constable. Before this, he was suspected of being pusillanimous, but now he is thought to be a very poor sort of fellow, afraid to pursue an enemy, beaten and almost in flight." Nevertheless,

the Constable's party was far from self-effacement; Coligny claimed the merit of driving back the Spanish. But Brantôme says, "It is well known that M. de Guise was the principal cause of the victory because of his skillful plan of attack, his sagacity, and his valor."

One incident in the battle is worth recalling. The Duke's standard-bearer, M. de Saint-Phal, had started before the signal, and ridden ahead farther than he should have. The Duke, greatly vexed, galloped after him and struck him a sharp blow on the helmet to stop him. M. de Saint-Phal flashed out in anger, "How, Sir! You strike me!" The Duke, having no time to spare, rode on. After the battle he was told that M. de Saint-Phal was much offended. The Duke remarked, "I will appease him"; and, meeting him at the King's tent, he said out loud before everybody: "M. de Saint-Phal! You feel yourself aggrieved by the stroke I gave you yesterday, because you had gone too far ahead. It was much better to make you stop when you were running into great danger, than if I had struck to make you go ahead when you were hanging back. So, my stroke, if you will accept it in the right way, was an honor rather than an insult. And all these gentlemen here will bear witness of this (they were listening with admiration to his handsome apology). So let us be on the same terms as before."

So far the favors of Fortune had all been with the Duke, but now the Constable won a move. He compelled his eldest son, much against the son's will, to marry Diane de France, the King's daughter by a Piedmontese lady. This was a great satisfaction to the King. And then followed the Duke's unsuccessful campaign in Italy. The King had inherited his father's hankering for dominion in Italy, and in 1556 a campaign was planned of which the Cardinal of Lorraine was the main promoter. He urged the King to assert his ancestral claims to Milan and Naples. Italy, he represented, hung like ripe fruit that would fall at a resolute touch. If the King were to gain possession of the dukedom of Milan and the Kingdom of Naples, he would hold the papacy between upper

and lower millstones, and could compel the Pope to do what he liked. With a subservient pope, France would stand high above the Empire. Charles VIII had conquered all Italy as easily as catching a fly; to be sure he had lost it equally fast, as if on opening his fist the fly had flown out, but such a losing, with wise heads in the cabinet, could never happen again. And the Cardinal, weaving the wisps of fantasy into a shining pattern, imagined that Naples, once conquered, should and would be assigned to the worthiest of good King René's descendants, and if François de Guise wore the Neapolitan crown, and Milan were in the hands of one of the King's sons, who would have a better likelihood of being the favorite candidate of the Holy Spirit for the papal tiara than himself, already recognized as eminently *papabile*?

The dream touched the King's fancy. Moreover, Pope Paul IV and his nephew Cardinal Caraffa were urgent for a French expedition; they were Neapolitans and hated the Spaniards. It was a wild plan; nevertheless, the Cardinal of Lorraine felt confident. So the Duc de Guise crossed the Alps in winter at the head of a French army; but things went wrong. The bark of St. Peter was sadly tossed about by the winds and waves of French and Spanish rivalry, and the Caraffas—you can see their clever, crafty faces in Titian's portrait at Naples—after prayerful consideration of the fable of the cat and the chestnuts, convinced themselves that their only safety lay in very mendacious diplomacy; so, Duplicity at the prow and Hypocrisy at the helm, they steered their dubious way. The Duke had expected honesty and help; he found neither. He floundered about, but there was nothing he could do. The expedition was virtually a total failure. In August he received an order of recall. This waste of effort, of money and men, would have sadly tipped the scales in favor of the Constable and his nephew, but Fortune never was more full of coquetry, and Guise's star again shone bright by the eclipse of Montmorency. In this same month of August, 1557, the Imperialists, sixty thousand strong, invaded France from the Low Countries and laid siege to Saint-Quentin,

which lies on the right bank of the river Somme. Coligny, with a small force, managed to slip into the town by night. A week later the Constable, coming up from the south, boasted that he would show the enemy *un tour de vieille guerre*, and attempted to send in more reinforcements. No doubt it was a difficult task, but Montmorency delayed and bungled. The able Imperialist general took full advantage of Montmorency's mistakes; his army came down in a solid mass on the scattered French divisions, and drove them in headlong flight. Three thousand were killed, twice that number wounded and six thousand taken prisoner, among them the Constable himself, the Maréchal de Saint-André, and other great nobles. A few days later Ambroise Paré, the surgeon, visited the battle-field and found it strewn with "dead bodies all sunken and unrecognizable from corruption," a prey to dogs and birds. The disaster was immense. Coligny was obliged to surrender the town. When the old ex-emperor, Charles V, in his monastery of Saint-Yuste, heard the news, he asked: "Is my son in Paris?"

## CHAPTER X

### CALAIS AND CATEAU-CAMBRÉSIS

IT WAS at this juncture that the Duc de Guise arrived at Saint-Germain. His rivals were prisoners of war, and he alone stood between prostrate France and a triumphant enemy. The King appointed him lieutenant-general, which made him, in the Constable's absence, commander-in-chief. And, at once, in his careful way, he set to work to render the French armies able to defend the Kingdom. He was one of those men who take so great pains that the actions that spring from them bear all the marks of genius. But defense did not satisfy his hungry spirit; he must do something that would show her enemies, England and Spain, that France was dangerous.

The city of Calais, ever since Edward III had captured it two hundred and eleven years before, had remained in English hands, a convenient gate for English archers and men-at-arms to invade the northern provinces of France. Detractors of the Duke say that the idea of recapture was filched by him from others; Montmorency had thought of it, Coligny had thought of it, the King had thought of it. This is a foolish criticism. Ever since Jeanne d'Arc and the Bâtard d'Orléans had driven the English from the rest of France, every aspiring French soldier had entertained an ambition to recapture Calais. The others dreamed of it, the Duke of Guise did it.

The city, except for one avenue of approach by land, was surrounded by ditches, watery sands and marshes, over which, in winter, the water flooded deep. There were two forts; one com-

manded the approach to the harbor by sea, the other the approach to the city by the narrow connecting strip of land. The citadel stood at the west of the town. In summer it was the English custom to keep a strong garrison there, but in winter they relied upon the protecting waters, and reduced the force materially. For this reason the Duke laid his plans to attack in winter. He collected a fleet as quickly as he could, giving out various pretexts, and his brother the Cardinal raised money to pay adequate forces by land. In November (1557) his officers, disguised as fishermen, were reconnoitering the fortifications, the shore and the road of approach, and by January 1 all was ready, and the Duke marched openly up to the city. The English had got news of the approaching attack, but two hundred years had lulled them into false confidence. The Commandant wrote to Queen Mary to ask for help, but she answered that she was informed that no danger was to be apprehended. The Duke acted with promptitude. His way was to make most careful preparations and then strike hard. The day after arrival he made a personal reconnaissance by night, taking advantage of ebb tide to examine the dunes. The next day, Monday, before dawn, he began a cannonade against the forts and compelled the garrisons to withdraw into the town. On Tuesday the French batteries were directed upon the citadel; in two days a breach was effected, and on Thursday, the Feast of Epiphany, the citadel was carried by storm. Defense was no longer possible, and the city surrendered.

The fame of the great Duke shone like a beacon light. He had saved Metz from the Spaniards, he had taken Calais from the English. He was the nation's darling. People cried out that he was "born to be the support of Religion and the Throne, a man sent by Providence to save the country twice." The Parlement of Paris declared that "his glory spread through all the world," while courtiers, ambassadors and poets sang his praises. Joachim Du Bellay wrote:

*Ce que parlant de soy, César même disoit,  
Cettuy-cy peult le dire à bon droit (ce me semble),  
Je suis venu, j'ai veu, j'ay vaincu tout ensemble.*

The words that Caesar of himself did say,  
Of right, this man (methinketh) may,  
I came, I saw, I conquered, at Calais.

The Duke was now, beyond cavil, the first man in France after the King. And yet, high as the fortunes of the House of Guise now stood, they rose higher still. On April 19, 1558, the Dauphin was betrothed to Mary Queen of Scots (niece to the Duke and Cardinal), in the great hall of that part of the Louvre built by Pierre Lescot, either, it would seem, in the Salle des Caryatides or the Salle La Caze, the Cardinal de Lorraine officiating; and, a few days later, on April 24, the marriage was celebrated in the Cathedral of Notre-Dame. Here, in the absence of the Constable, still a captive, the Duc de Guise, acting as Grand-Maître (Lord High Steward), was marshal of the ceremonies. It was a notable ceremony, and the Duke "*donna si bon ordre à tout qu'il en remporta grand louange*, performed his task so well that he won great praise."

One would expect from these brilliant successes that François de Guise would have stood all-powerful in the State. But the very greatness of his fortune—he a national hero, and Montmorency in captivity—worked against him. The King was fond of the old Constable, and for one reason or another he did not like the Guises. As I have said, he was in the position of a slow-witted man continually urged on by men vastly his superiors in intelligence and energy. He was conscientious in listening to business, but all the time he wanted to get away from the council room and play *tiers* in the *jeu de paume*, or go hunting, or beat his friends at long jumping, while ladies looked on and admired his prowess. But he was kept indoors while the Cardinal unrolled before him all sorts of complicated matters, civic and ecclesiastical, or the Duke,

with solicitations, entreaties, almost commands, outlined schemes of offense and defense, of hiring lansquenets, reiters, Switzers, of casting cannon and culverin, of redoubts, bastions, transportation, carts, mules, apothecary's drugs and all the niceties of war. The King was personally brave, but war was a very serious matter, and, like all serious matters, bored him. Action, except for games, tournaments and the chase, bored him; he liked violent exercise for his athletic frame on horse or afoot, and then to come back to dinner, and after dinner to talk awhile to the still beautiful Diana, and then a good bed and a solid sleep. The one man he really liked was the Constable. Anne de Montmorency, too, was dull, a regular old soldier, whose mind revolved slowly on familiar rails, stopped at regular stations, a sort of huckleberry train of a mind, running on a Sunday schedule, and yet so full of experience, loyalty and courage that very few realized how poor a mind he had. The King missed him very much and wanted him back.

The only way for the King to get Montmorency back was to make peace with Spain. And, indeed, there were good reasons for peace; both Kingdoms were exhausted, the two Kings had drained their treasuries, and squeezed the last pennies from their impoverished subjects. Bankers, merchants, manufacturers, shopkeepers, farmers, all wanted peace. And not only Montmorency, but the Maréchal de Saint-André, the Duc de Longueville, the Duc de Montpensier, the Comte de la Rochefoucauld, and Coligny, were Spanish prisoners, and longed to get home. Montmorency was nearing seventy, his fingers itched to hold the reins of government and displace the Guises; besides, he wanted to see what Pierre Chambiges and Jean Bullant had done at Chantilly, and he had his old hankering to add to his collection of art. Diane de Poitiers, also, alarmed at the power of the Guises, threw her influence on the side of getting the Constable back. So did the Queen, beginning to feel the strength that came with her brood of children. In spite of remonstrances from the great Duke, negotiations for peace were begun; Montmorency, Saint-André and the Car-

dinal de Lorraine were appointed the French commissioners. There were many difficult questions. The English demanded the return of Calais; Antoine de Bourbon, King of Navarre, wished to recover his Spanish provinces, and the Empire desired back the three bishoprics, Metz, Toul, and Verdun. In this matter, and, I think, for the first time, the Duc de Guise and his brother the Cardinal were not of one mind. The Cardinal looked to the interests of the Church, and desired peace in order to enable the governments of France and Spain to make a united attack upon heresy; the Duke looked to the military interests of the Kingdom and desired war. The King had chosen his commissioners for the sake of peace, he knew that the country needed peace and that the Duke was the only obstacle. He wrote to Montmorency:

“My friend . . . I assure you that M. de Guise does not want peace. He remonstrates and says that I have greater means to continue the war than ever I had, and that I shall not lose as much by making war as I shall by making peace. . . . Do all you can to give us peace; and don’t show this letter to anyone but Maréchal de Saint-André, and then burn it. The person (named in my letter) said to somebody here that not one of you would get out of prison as long as the war lasts. So, reflect on this. It is a matter that concerns you.”

Undoubtedly the Constable did reflect upon it. So did his fellow commissioner, the Maréchal de Saint-André. On the other hand there was some support for the Duke of Guise and his military policy. The King of Navarre, Antoine de Bourbon, disappointed that no attention was paid to his claims to recover the Spanish port of Navarre, sent one of his gentlemen to the Duc de Guise with this message:

“The King of Navarre is wholly friendly to the Duc de Guise and the Cardinal of Lorraine, not only as a cousin but as a brother. . . . And although M. le Connétable has written him

several letters, he has always said that he would never trust him, for he well knows that this semblance of friendship that the Constable shows him is merely to draw him over to the Constable's side, in order to ruin the Guises. The little account the Constable made of the King of Navarre's interests in these negotiations shows clearly how little friendship he really has."

And Maréchal Brissac, who held a command in Piedmont, sent his secretary to plead with the King against the proposed abandonment of the French claims to Italy. The Duc de Guise, who was present at the interview between the secretary and the King, broke in: "I swear to you, Sire, that you are taking the wrong road. Even if you did nothing but lose for thirty years, you could not lose as much as you are ready to give up at a single stroke. Put me in the worst of the places that you propose to surrender, and I will defend it in the breach with more honor than I could ever gain during so disadvantageous a peace as you wish to make. And you have other servants, Sire, who would do as much as I, both here and in Italy. Trust to my brother's zeal and to mine to obtain the moneys necessary to equip and maintain, during an entire campaign, an army as strong as that which you had a year ago. You would not even have to summon the States-General again, for my brother has already spoken to several rich bankers, and they, upon security that we have agreed upon, will bond themselves to make the necessary payments and advances." And he went on to lay before the King his plans to capture Douai, Cambrai, Lille, Valenciennes and so forth. The King pretended to be impressed by his arguments, and sent Brissac's secretary on to the plenipotentiaries, but he also wrote a secret note to the Constable, representing that the Guises' plans were mere plots to enable them to remain at the head of affairs, and he pressed for the execution of the treaty.

The treaty was signed on April 3, 1559. France submitted to large demands; she renounced Savoy, and almost all her claims on Italy, but recovered some cities on the northeast border. Brissac

exclaimed: "O wretched France, to what ruin you have let yourself be reduced, you that can triumph over all the nations of Europe!" Brantôme says: "In one hour, by the stroke of a pen, we were obliged to surrender everything, to smirch and blacken all our noble victories gained, for three or four drops of ink."

Among the terms of the treaty it was agreed that the King's daughter Elizabeth should marry Philip II, and his sister Marguerite, the Duke of Savoy. On the occasion of this double wedding there were great celebrations, and a three-day tournament was run in the Rue Saint-Antoine, in front of the Hotel des Tournelles, where the Place des Vosges stands today. On the last day the athletic King jested against the Duke of Lorraine, the Duke de Guise and a young captain of his Scotch guard, Gabriel Montgomery; in this last encounter the King had got slightly the worst of it, and insisted in running another course. This time Montgomery's spear broke, the wooden shaft split into shivers, and one splinter penetrated the opening of the visor, wounding the King in the temple. Ambroise Paré and the famous Belgian surgeon Vesalius worked over the wound in vain; the King died on July 10, 1559. His last words were: "May my people remain steadfast in the faith in which I die."

## CHAPTER XI

### THE BACKGROUND

THE Spanish war, as we have seen, continued all through King Henry's reign, but it must not be thought to dominate the pattern of those twelve years. That pattern, on the whole, is gay, warm, joyous and elegant. Ronsard's picture of spring may be applied to it:

*Au mois de May que l'Aube retournée  
Avoit esclose une belle journée,  
Et que les voix d'un million d'oiseaux,  
Comme à l'envy du murmure des eaux,  
Qui haut, qui bas, contoient leurs amourettes  
A la rosée, aux vents, et aux fleurettes;*

*Lors'que le ciel au Printemps se sourit,  
Quand toute plante en jeunesse fleurit;  
Quand tout sent bon, et que la riche terre  
Ses riches bien de son ventre desserre  
Toute joyeuse en son enfantement.*

When Dawn returning, in the month of May,  
Had fresh disclosed a beauteous day,  
And million birds their madrigals  
Had murmured with the water-falls,  
One loud, one low, of love and lovers true,  
To flowers, and winds and morning dew;

Then Heaven itself smiled on the spring  
And budding plants for joy did sing,  
And all smelt sweet and the rich earth  
A wealth of beauty brought to birth.

To be sure, there is a black recurrent figure that runs through it all, and in succeeding reigns blots the fair design like spilt ink; but during Henry's life the sunny colors prevail, and we must think of the Cardinal of Lorraine in his Maison de Cluny among tapestries from Flanders, enamels from Limoges, and bits of ancient beauty dug up in Italy, and of the famous Duke, in intervals between campaigns, at his great castle in Joinville, looking down across gardens, and vineyards and the steep roofs of the town, at the pleasant valley of the winding Marne, while, within, pictures, statues and well-wrought furniture showed the taste of his parents and of his Italian wife. Fontainebleau, Chambord, Chenonceaux, Anet, Écouen, Chantilly, Saint-Germain, Azay-le-Rideau—Philippe Delorme, Jean Bullant, Pierre Lescot, Jean Goujon, Germain Pilon, Pierre Bontemps, Clouet, Goudimel, Rabelais, Ronsard, Joachim Du Bellay, Remy Belleau, their owners, patrons, admirers and followers, make the real background of the time.

The black recurrent figure that casts a shadow across this goodly garden is heroic, or the shadow would be neither so large nor so dark, but one wishes it had never fallen there. With much that men, wisely or not, call good, John Calvin adopted all that is dubious in the teachings of Hebraic Christianity. Because children are sometimes childish, why should a prophet call upon she-bears to devour them? Convinced that nobody who disagreed with him could be right, Calvin disapproved of dissentients as cordially as the Spanish inquisitors, and, full of scorn for those that lacked his iron character, sneered at liberals who approved "that pretty book *De non comburendis hereticis*." It is sad to see so much intellect, so much courage, spilling from ancient sacred vessels the milk of human kindness and laboring for the triumph of a cause that did not make for human happiness. The Renaissance had accepted the pagan attitude of bonhomie and kindly indifference for ideas beyond man's reach, Erasmus treated the errors and waywardness of the Catholic Church with charming intellectual levity, Rabelais railed at the monastic system with jolly benevo-



Remy Belleau



lence; but Calvin took life hard. He knew no doubts. His righteousness—however unpleasant, however unkind, however untrue it might look to the ordinary man—Calvinistic righteousness, must prevail in this naughty world; the errors of Popery must be overthrown; Epicureans must learn that they are playing with fire; ignorant people who venerate men and women in whom they find divine virtues must be hauled away from that abhorrent practice; simple-minded men of lonely heart, maimed and incomplete without the compassion of the divinely feminine, must not commit the idolatrous outrage of worshipping the Virgin Mary; no longer should the overburdened conscience free itself in the confessional. Away with traditions, wrought by centuries of spiritual hunger! Let the sick soul find comfort, though of itself helpless, all its good works vain, in the blessed doctrine that it may be, or may not be, among the elect whom God in His good pleasure has chosen from all eternity—may be saved for everlasting felicity by God's grace, or may be doomed to all eternity. During the following reigns Calvin's accomplishments will dominate the scene, the new order of dissent will struggle with the old order of conformity, in hatred and passion, in battle and murder; but in Henry's time there is a delightful garden of art and thought and poetry, in which the Cardinal of Lorraine, the Cardinal Du Bellay and other cultivated prelates and lords enjoy the works and the friendships of artists and men of letters.

The reign of Henri II makes a zone of division between the epoch of François Premier and that of the later Valois; it is both a fulfillment and a promise. In the earlier period came the first burst of Renaissance architecture, in its enchanting youth—there is the wing of the Château de Blois with its glorious stairway, there are Chambord, Azay-le-Rideau, Villandry and so forth—a period when the French architects had fallen in love with Italian decoration, but contented themselves with outer adornments devised in Tuscany, Lombardy or Venetia. In sculpture the atelier of Michel Colombe guarded the pure French tradition, and there was also the

gracious school of Troyes, that followed nature in simplicity, tenderness and truth. In literature there were Clément Marot and Rabelais; for though Marot had his serious side, with his psalms and Calvinistic leanings, due rather to aversion from orthodox bigotry than to any concern over doctrine, he had his light side as well. See his *Épitre au roi pour avoir été dérobé*, his airy *Dialogue des deux Amoureux*, or his epigrams against his theological enemy, the Sorbonne:

Paris to beautify, the King  
(With other useful laws) ordains  
The building of some lovely thing,  
And thereto money gives and pains;  
A new town-hall both *belle et bonne*  
And public squares to hold the masses,  
And in the rooms of the Sorbonne  
Sufficient space to house the asses.

Rabelais's book, too, is so gay that Montaigne ranks it among books *simplement plaisans*, a book of merriment, *un livre joyeux*, as Émile Faguet calls it. And his philosophy is the very spirit of the French Renaissance, "Let every man possess his soul in cheerfulness, let him sing, laugh and talk, enjoy the golden sunshine and the purple wine, and live according to the laws of the world." It is this spirit that rendered artist and artisan jocund and debonair, and tinged with lovely fancy all their carvings—flowers, vines, birds, sirens, scrolls—that adorn the châteaux of the Renaissance. Their theological doctrine is to "*rêjouir sans offense de Dieu*, to enjoy joy without doing wrong." Is not Rabelais's view of *le grand Peut-être*, and of the appropriate preparation for it, wiser, kinder, and more comforting, than Calvin's?

All our *dramatis personae* took pleasure in the arts. François Premier delighted in them. Anne de Montmorency employed Jean Bullant, the famous architect, and Jean Goujon, *imagier, maître maçon et architecte*, at his château at Écouen; and he beauti-

fied this château with mural paintings of great excellence and with stained glass, part grisaille, part telling stories of Cupid and Psyche, of banqueting gods, of Proserpina (some the work of Bernard Palissy). He placed there Michael Angelo's statues of the *Two Slaves* and a copy of Leonardo's *Last Supper*. Later, at Chantilly, he employed Jean Bullant to build the *châtelet*, and he furnished the *grand château* with all sorts of *objets d'art*, tapestries and faïence from Italy and Flanders, enamels by Léonard Limosin, and suchlike. Claude de Guise filled the great castle at Joinville with all sorts of things, he built the *Château du Jardin*, and had his portrait, and that of Antoinette, done in enamel by one of the Limousin masters, perhaps by Léonard, perhaps by one of the Pénicauds, or Pierre Reymon or Pierre Courtoys. Cardinal Jean de Lorraine, when he acquired the Seigneurie of Meudon, built a château there, employed the fashionable Italian painter and worker in stucco, Primaticce, to construct a grotto, and Philibert Delorme to bring water from the Seine, and he gave the curacy to Rabelais.

With Henry the Second's reign the Renaissance takes a turn, goes in a new direction, imitating the antique. Poets must drink of Helicon and go to Homer and Virgil, architects must study Vitruvius and visit the remains of temples on their ancient sites; Philibert Delorme calls the classical style *la vraie architecture*. He himself had spent three years in Rome, studying, measuring, making drawings (1533-1536), and there he met the cultivated Cardinal Du Bellay, the French ambassador (uncle to the poet), who had brought Rabelais with him, and was collecting statues and antiques for himself and for Anne de Montmorency. Du Bellay took Delorme into his employ and introduced him to the Constable, to Diane de Poitiers and to Henry II, then Dauphin. For Du Bellay, Delorme designed the Château Saint-Maur (1541-1544) "the paradise of health, pleasantness, tranquillity, comfort, delight and all the innocent pleasures of agriculture and country life," as Rabelais said of it. For Diane de Poitiers he built the

Château d'Anet, and later a bridge across the Cher for her Château of Chenonceaux, and under Henri II he became superintendent of public buildings, and took control of all royal palaces, except the Louvre, of which Pierre Lescot had charge. Delorme's Palace of the Tuilleries is gone, but that portion of the Palace of the Louvre designed by Lescot and adorned by the sculpture of Jean Goujon—"ciséle comme un joyeau," as Anatole France says—stands there to delight all visitors.

Jean Goujon embodied in stone the gaiety, delicacy and grace of the French Renaissance. His nymphs of the *Fontaine des Innocents*, in Paris, and their attendant bas-reliefs, his nymphs of the Seine and her sister rivers, his little angels and *renomées* from the Château d'Anet, his work at Écouen for Montmorency, his caryatids in the great hall of the Louvre, and his decorations for Lescot's façade, combine lightness, grace and dignity so naturally that it seems he must have played Peeping Tom to nymphs, naiads and dryads as they stood, or sat or lay, listening to the pipes of Pan. Even the dormer windows which he designed for Diana's modest mansion at Étampes display his delicacy; and the relief of *Renown* on the Louvre deservedly found a place in Ronsard's verse:

For the King's glory you have carved aloft  
A goddess on the palace of the Louvre,  
Who through her trumpet of Renown, with cheeks  
Full rounded, blows forever—And, please tell  
The King that she doth represent my verse,  
That bruits his name throughout the universe.

And it was in the beginning of Henry's reign that Ronsard, Joachim Du Bellay, Remy Belleau and their co-mates translated the ancient Greek poets, composed verses and formed the *Pléiade*. Two of them, Du Bellay and Ronsard, issued the manifesto of the new school, the *Défense et Illustration de la langue française*. Ronsard leapt into fame, became a familiar friend of the King, and of Mary Queen of Scots, and afterwards of Charles IX. Étienne

Pasquier says, "Never before had France had such a harvest of poets, *telle foison de poètes*" (1555). All were conservative, all loved law and order and beauty, and all were good Catholics. Pontus de Tyard became a bishop. And all the time Calvin was reigning in the little republic of Geneva, concerning himself with "blasphemies against God and mockery of the Christian religion," and planning the overthrow of Catholicism. But Ronsard, chewing the cud of sweet fancy, occupied his thoughts with the charm of women, Cassandre, Marie, Hélène de Surgères, with the beauty of the rose, of fountains, and of the Forest of Gâtine:

*L'Esté je dors ou repose  
Sus ton herbe, où je compose,  
Caché sous tes saules vers,  
Je ne sçay quoy, qui ta gloire  
Enviroit par l'univers,  
Commandant à la Mémoire  
Que tu vives par mes vers.*

In summer I sleep, or repose,  
On your grass, where I compose,  
Hid beneath a willow tree,  
Poems that shall your glory be  
Throughout the wide Universe,  
Commanding Memory  
That you live by my verse.

And Joachim Du Bellay composed his *Épitaphe d'un petit chien* at the time that Jean Calvin was expressing in a letter to Madame de Cany his dislike of a fellow man with whose views on theology he disagreed: "Knowing in part what sort of man he was, if I had had my wish he would have rotted in a ditch. His coming gave me as much joy as if a dagger had been twisted in my heart. But I never could have believed him so execrable a monster of all the impieties, scorning God, as he himself has declared, and I assure you that, if he had not escaped so soon, merely to do my

duty, I would have sent him to the stake." But Du Bellay did not frequent the heights of Calvinistic theology; he merely describes his dog *Peloton*, a little white-haired, long-eared dog with big eyes and a snub nose, and a little tuft in his tail like a bouquet, and paws more delicate than a pussycat's:

*Le plus grand mal, ce dict-on,  
Que feist notre Peloton,  
(Si mal appellé doit estre)  
C'estoit d'esveiller son maistre,  
Jappant quelquefois la nuict,  
Quand il sentoit quelque bruit,  
Ou bien le voyant escrire,  
Sauter, pour le faire rire,  
Sur la table, et trepigner,  
Follastrer, et gratigner,  
Et faire tumber sa plume,  
Comme il avoit de coustume.  
Mais quoy? nature ne faict  
En ce monde rien parfaict;  
Et n'y a chose si belle,  
Qui n'ait quelque vice en elle.*

The wickedest thing he ever did,  
(But not so grave as to be chid  
And not a serious disaster)  
Was to awake his sleeping master,  
By noisy barking in the night;  
Or, when he saw his master write,  
He'd jump upon the table then,  
To make him laugh and drop his pen,  
And by his wagging tail confess  
His jubilation at success.  
But surely Nature never wrought  
A dog that did all that it ought,  
Nor was ever a thing so beautified  
But some defect within did hide.

These poets had, in the sister art of painting, a worthy comrade in François Clouet, to whom are attributed so many charming drawings of notable persons; whose delicacy and precision make him worthy to a seat beside Lescot, Goujon and Ronsard, for his people seem to live in a world where men are noble and ladies modest; a draughtsman of moderation and restraint, of that *ne quid nimis* that Delorme took for his motto.

## CHAPTER XII

### PATRONS OF ART

I DO NOT find much said of Antoinette's interest in art beyond her care to make her husband's tomb magnificent, and that she gave a *Saint Sepulchre* (a group of noble figures laying Christ in a tomb) to the convent of Cordeliers at Joinville. She had lived too much away from the Court to have breathed the gay atmosphere of the Renaissance. Nor is it said that the young Duchess, wife of François, had time to show the interest in the arts that in all probability she had inherited, or acquired, at the Court of Ferrara. During her husband's lifetime she was too busy with her babies, Henri, born on December 31, 1550, Catherine, July 18, 1552, Charles, afterwards Duc de Mayenne, March 26, 1554. Besides, a châtelaine of a feudal castle in her husband's absence was a very busy woman. Queen Catherine showed, when she came to power, that she had a decided taste of her own, and good taste, in architecture. But the lady most conspicuously associated with the arts is Diane de Poitiers. It was not only in architecture that she was interested, but also, as I have said, in the works of Cellini, Goujon, Léonard Limosin and such, and in art generally. This was well known, and courtiers sought to take advantage of it. For instance, Cardinal Du Bellay writes to Philibert Delorme, while the latter is working on the Château d'Anet:

“Rome, St. John's day.

[My dear Philibert]

“ . . . M. le Maréchal [Robert de la Marck, who had married Diana's daughter Françoise] swears that he will not leave here

until I give him something to put over one of the doors at Anet, and has asked me to give him the measurements of the statue in order to prepare a niche for it. It is a head of Venus that I am sure is unsurpassed. The antiquaries here say that it is the work of Phidias. . . . It is half colossal, and will need a niche five feet broad and six tall, and must be placed pretty high on account of its bigness. I won't deny that there has been a struggle between my own desire for it and my devotion to the Duchess, but I gave in. The best you can do for me is to keep me in her good graces, and only for the sake of her good graces, for I shall not trouble her for anything else, being one who asks for nothing but rest at the end of my days.

“In haste, Yours affectionately,

“J. CARDINAL DU BELLAY.”

Of all the patrons and lovers of the French Renaissance and its works, as well as of the arts of Italy and antiquity, none excelled Charles the Cardinal of Lorraine, a very worthy nephew of his uncle Jean. Étienne Pasquier, the scholarly lawyer, sent him a copy of the first section of his book, *Les Recherches de la France*, and wrote him this letter:

“To the very Illustrious and Reverend Charles, Cardinal de Lorraine:

“You have your hands so full of great affairs that I ought rather keep silent than urge you to read my little *Recherches*. Nevertheless I know the homage that everyone, in his respective way, owes to you on the great stage of France, wherein the King has constituted you a sort of second sovereign; and I thought that, among so many lords and gentlemen and others who are devoted to you, I should seem ungrateful, if in acknowledging the benefits that all France receives by your means, I do not make you a present of my best vintage, . . . and I believe it will be the more agreeable to you,

because I have spent all my pains and efforts in an exposition of the things of France, which is the chief aim of all your talk and all your thoughts . . . and I propose to continue my enterprise . . . partly to rescue our France from the ravages of time, and also, if I may, to find some niche in your favor, at present the only resource of literature and learning."

There is always a temptation to panegyric when an author addresses a prime minister, or such, but Pasquier warns Ronsard never to flatter an unworthy person, and I believe that, like a gracious pastor, he follows his own counsel. The Cardinal, given his profound orthodoxy, was not only a very admirable man, but also a discriminating patron of art and letters; as to which, I shall call Ronsard as a witness, for he (following as I believe Pasquier's advice) never tires of singing the Cardinal's praises:

*Le monde ne va pas, comme dit Epicure,  
Par un cas fortuit, mais il va par raison;  
Chacun le peut juger, voyant votre maison,  
Qui d'art régit la France et non pas d'avanture.*

*Aussi le Roi vous aime, et le Ciel vous appreste  
Un triple diadème à bon droit sur la tête,  
Pour vous faire pasteur sur tous le souverain.*

The world does not—if Epicurus please—  
Proceed by chance but by a wise forethought  
For all may see France governed, as she ought,  
Not haphazard, but by the House of Guise.

The King admires you, and the Heavens hold  
The triple crown, of right, above your head  
To make you Pastor of the Christian fold.

That sonnet was of the time of François II, but Ronsard felt the same in the time of Henri II. In a hymn to Justice he says:



*(Photograph by Giraudon)*

Charles, Cardinal de Lorraine



*Au temps que le Destin en Gaule fera naistre  
 Henry second du nom, des autres rois le maistre,  
 Que les cieux à l'envy s'efforceront d'orner,  
 Justice avec ses soeurs là-bas doit retourner.  
 Ce grande Roi choisira un Prince de sa race,  
 Que d'honneur, de vertu, de sçavoir et de grâce  
 Entre tous les humains n'aura point son pareil,  
 Et sa bonté luira comme luit le soleil:  
 Il aura sur le front telle majesté peinte,  
 Que du premier abord le vice en aura crainte,  
 S'enfuyant devant luy, après l'avoir cognu,  
 Prince si jeune d'ans et de moeurs si chenu:  
 Celui sera nommé le Prélat de Lorraine,  
 Charles, dedans lequel ta fille souveraine  
 Miraculeusement tu feras transformer,  
 Pour les faicts vicieux des humains réformer;  
 Elle prendra son corps:*

....

*Mon Charles, mon Prélat, mon Laurier de Lorraine!*

When Destiny, in France, shall bring to birth  
 The Second Henry, first of Kings in worth,  
 Whom Heav'n with all its blessings shall befriend,  
 Then Justice and her mates will redescend.  
 That noble King will choose from out his race  
 A Prince, all honor, goodness, learning, grace,  
 In all mankind, of rivals hath he none;  
 His Virtue shines as brightly as the sun,  
 And in his face such majesty appears  
 That Vice on seeing it succumbs to fears  
 And flies afar, soon as it shall behold  
 A Prince in years so young, in virtues old.  
 His name shall be the Prelate of Lorraine,  
 Charles Guise, and then the Virtue Sovereign,  
 Justice herself, shall pass into his form,  
 The vicious ways of mankind to reform,  
 And his body metamorphosed be—.

Then, after bestowing deserved praise upon the Goddess Justice, the poet returns to her simulacrum, the Cardinal, and enumerates all that he can do, make war, make peace, greet strangers, raise money, quell danger, accomplish this, achieve that—in short, “*Tu dis tout, tu fais tout!*” And then he tells how, when the Cardinal has leisure from public affairs, he turns to poetry. It is this trait in him that endears him most to Ronsard:

*Et tant que vivant je seray,  
Jamais je ne confesseray  
Qu'en France la Muse périsse,  
Tant qu'elle aura pour souverain  
Un Charles Cardinal Lorrain,  
Qui la défende et la chérisse.*

As long as I shall live—oh, yes—  
I swear I never will confess  
The Muse can die in France,  
While she shall have for sovereign  
Charles, Cardinal of Lorraine,  
To guard and lend her countenance.

In these panegyrics Ronsard is not at his best as a poet, but the reader must remember that his fame and position at Court, a friend of kings and queens, was such that he addressed the Cardinal of Lorraine as equal to equal. Not since Petrarch had any poet enjoyed so great a European reputation. Brantôme relates how once, when he was in Venice, he went into a workshop kept by a cultivated and travelled gentleman and asked for a copy of Petrarch's poems. The Venetian, speaking now in Italian, now in pretty good French, said, “Why do you want Petrarch? You have twice as good a poet in France,” and then went on to laud Ronsard to the skies. Brantôme adds, “*Il avait raison*—he was right.” And Agrippa d'Aubigné among his earliest efforts at verse asserts that, listening to voices in all the four corners of the world, from the savage cannibal to the far-off Scythian, he could hear no sound but Ronsard!

Ronsard! and shouts of praise. And King Charles IX, a cultivated young man in his way, is believed to have written the verses that assert that poetry ought to be esteemed above kingcraft, and a poet rank higher than a king, Ronsard higher than he,

*Je puis donner la mort, toi l'immortalité*

—I can give death, you give immortality.

This high society, as you see, prized arts and letters, and as one gazes on Ronsard, Goujon, Clouet, the period almost seems to revive a Golden Age; but, as I have said, a dark shadow fell across it, and to that I must return.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE REFORMATION

IN ANCIENT times men took their religion lightly; the Romans were a reasonable people and allowed everybody to worship what god he pleased, so long as that worship did not disturb the peace or violate the laws of the state. Rome was open-minded, and offered her hospitality to gods and goddesses from Asia Minor, Syria or Egypt, and granted them temples on the Esquiline hill, or the Coelian, or in the Forum. But Christianity brought in a very different kind of god—"I the Lord thy God am a jealous god—thou shalt have no other gods before me"—and all hospitality to foreign gods was withdrawn. The popes, as vice-regents of God on earth, undertook to enforce this commandment, and succeeded in western Europe, so that for long centuries the principle of unity—one faith, one sheepfold, one shepherd—was pretty well followed. An elaborate organization, based upon that of the Roman Empire, of archbishoprics, bishoprics, parishes, held Latin Christianity together. When the Renaissance came, it diverted the minds of men and took from the Church much intellectual interest and support, and the ancient ecclesiastical fabric suffered; in the Roman Curia plain living went quite out of fashion, and in the priesthood, and among the monks and friars, the standard of conduct adapted itself to human weaknesses. Things went so far that on all sides arose voices crying for reformation. All assented with their lips, but the prelates failed to generate the self-abnegation necessary to reform the Church, and others undertook to supply their deficiencies.

It turned out to be easier to break away than to reform. And

in Germany the Lutherans did break away; they took up arms and fought Charles V until they forced him to agree to their separation from Rome. England, under conditions peculiar to herself, also broke loose. In France, circumstances were very different; the people were Latin and there was no much-marrying Henry VIII, there were no Lutheran princes with independent principalities; the first reformers were kindly, sweet-tempered people who felt the charm of the Gospels and merely wanted the Church to follow the doctrines of the Sermon on the Mount. Of such were Marguerite of Navarre, Lefèvre d'Étaples, Briçonnet. Others followed, less sweet-tempered, more truculent. The conservative classes, seated in comfort upon a social order, buttressed by the established religion, were shocked and horrified. The anarchical Lutheran proletarians, whom Claude de Guise cut to pieces at Neufchâteau, frightened them almost to death; they wished to stay, and they proposed to stay, in that social condition to which it had pleased God to call them. Persecution began; the Protestants retaliated with outrages. The great majority of Frenchmen, especially in Paris, were staunchly Catholic, and public opinion demanded stern punishments. François Premier, converted from his earlier sympathy, came to the same way of thinking: he said that "if his arm was infected with such corruption, he would cut it from his body, if his own children were so unfortunate as to fall into those accursed doctrines, he would cut them down as a sacrifice to God." Edict after edict against the reformers was issued; and, towards the close of his reign, sixty-one persons were arrested at Meaux; of these, fourteen men were condemned to torture and to be burned alive, one to be strung up by the shoulders while he witnessed the burning, then to be whipped and imprisoned, others to be whipped, but the rest of them were let go. Such was the state of things when François I died.

His son, Henri II, was wholly uninterested in the intellectual side of the Reform, but, from early influences and the ardent sympathies of Diana, as well as the calmer sympathies of Cath-

erine de Médicis, would, no doubt, had foreign politics given him leisure, have dealt rigorously with the heretics, but foreign politics prevented any sustained system of suppression. In his struggle with Philip of Spain, the King needed the aid of the Lutheran princes of Germany, and therefore had to regard their sensibilities. As a consequence, an infiltration of Lutheranism started groups of reformers here and there. Soon the time was ripe for a man of genius to appear; and he did. Calvin established a theocracy in the little republic of Geneva, based on certain fundamental dogmas: God is omnipotent; His creature, man, sinned, and all men are tainted by Adam's sin, and can be saved only by God's grace; works do not co-operate in the task of salvation; God has chosen His elect, from eternity; and Popery is of the Devil. This ecclesiastical state had a democratic organization; the congregation of a church elected elders and deacons, and they elected the minister. Safely ensconced just across the border, Calvin sent missionaries and tracts into France. The seed fell on fertile soil. This politico-theological fabric, based on a verbal acceptance of Holy Writ, erected by logic, and fortified by purity of life and upright conduct, exercised a strong influence over many serious people. At first it took hold of artisans and shopkeepers, then of lawyers, school-teachers and students, and gradually members of the gentry and the aristocracy. The sister of Mme d'Étampes was converted, and various distinguished artists, Jean Goujon the sculptor, Philibert Delorme the architect, Bernard Palissy the potter, Goudimel the musician. The Catholics regarded the movement as a disease, with poisonous microbes affecting the body politic, here and there, subtly and insidiously.

In 1555 the Protestants of Paris organized themselves into a church, those in other cities followed their example; these scattered churches united, and in 1559, the year that Henry II was killed, a national Protestant Synod was held. Here was the beginning of what foresighted people could see would, if left unchecked, develop into an *imperium in imperio*. In the face of this growing

revolt, the forces of conservatism acted with intermittent vigor. A few months after the death of François I, a new court, *La chambre ardente*, was established to exercise jurisdiction upon cases of heresy. The punishments sound horrible to us, but we must remember that the punishments of the Criminal code were, if possible, more horrible still. Common criminals convicted of slight offenses were scourged or had their ears cut off; convicted of serious offenses, they were torn with red-hot pincers, or cut into quarters; forgers were boiled alive, or tied in sacks and thrown into the river. Nobody doubted the beneficial effect of terror. Calvin agreed that heretics should be put to death—*Haereticos jure gladii coercendos esse*. The Parlement de Paris, a very orthodox body, was of a like opinion, as for instance:

“The Court condemns the said Robert le Lièvre, called the Séraphin, as the principal wrongdoer, to be taken from the prisons of the said Conciergerie, and laid upon a sledge and dragged to the Place Maubert, and the said Thuillier, Maréchal, and Jean Camus (accomplices) each to be put on a tumbril in front of the said sledge, and taken to the said Place Maubert, where four gallows will be erected; of these gallows one shall be a foot higher than the others, on which the said le Lièvre, called Séraphin, principal author of the crimes and offenses aforesaid, shall be fastened and on the other three gallows the said Thuillier, Maréchal and Jean le Camus shall be fastened, and round each of said gallows a great fire shall be lighted at that time, and the said prisoners shall be burned alive and their bodies consumed to ashes.”

The Huguenots—a term of doubtful origin—answered back as best they could, they blasphemed, they flouted the sacraments, but the offense that stirred popular hatred to madness was the mutilation of statues of the Virgin. No element in the Catholic cult was more tenderly associated with what men hold dear than the worship of the Virgin, emblem of maidenhood with its appeal to

man's chivalry, and of motherhood, the deepest of human relations. This sentiment had reached its height, at least in manifestation, in the building of the great cathedrals, Notre-Dame de Chartres, Notre-Dame de Paris, Notre-Dame de Reims, Notre-Dame d'Évreux, Notre-Dame de Rouen, Notre-Dame de Bayeux and so many others. God the Father was remote, and many an anxious heart must have been skeptical of His wisdom and goodness in the creation of this world; God the Son was to act as Judge on the dreadful day of the Last Judgment, *Dies irae*; but Mary was always tender, always gracious, always compassionate, as loving as the most loving human mother, holding her arms out to the sinner and interceding for him. The Huguenots took a spirited delight in breaking her statues. They also smashed images of the saints "*abus et fallace de Satan*," and they railed at Purgatory, calling it "an illusion from the same shop from which also proceed monastic vows, pilgrimages, celibacy of the clergy, fasting, auricular confession and indulgences."

But by the time of the death of Henri II the position of the Huguenots had changed greatly. Biblical texts had led to dogma, dogma to a church, a church to authority; and, when the Synod of 1559 had united the independent churches scattered all over France into one body, which took Geneva as its model, it became merely a question of time when the dissentient Ecclesiastical State should confront the National State and challenge its supremacy. This came when certain great nobles joined the Huguenot ranks—out of piety, out of ambition, out of feudal discontent, jealousy, envy and many-colored motives.

The Catholics had been growing more and more apprehensive, but the war with Spain had kept the King from vigorous action. Now, signs on all sides began to make them feel that enemies at home were more dangerous than the Spaniards. During the negotiations for the treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis, the Cardinal of Lorraine went before the Parlement de Paris and stated that the King wanted peace at almost any price, "in order to have time and

leisure to root out Calvin's heresy." And, accordingly, shortly after peace had been made, the King, accompanied by the Cardinals of Lorraine and Guise and by the Constable, assisted at a session of the Parlement, and there, to their horror and dismay, they heard several members not only speak in favor of an œcumical council and lighter punishments for heretics, but also find fault with abuses in the Church, and deliver opinions worse than improper. The King ordered the arrest of the principal speakers (June 10, 1559), and in due course the worst offender, Anne de Bourg, was sentenced to be burned alive on the Place de Grève. On June 30 the King received his fatal wound. The King's last words, "May my people remain steadfast in the faith in which I die," were ominous. The suppression of heresy became the dominant political question.

## CHAPTER XIV

### REIGN OF FRANÇOIS II

ON HIS father's death the Dauphin duly became King, as François II. He was a lad of sickly body and ordinary mind, fifteen years old, and under the thumb of his beautiful young wife, who was a few months older in time and much older in development of mind and character—"a great doer," the English ambassador reported. The immediate question was, who should be chosen to carry on the government, for the King obviously lacked capacity and experience.

If kinship was to determine the choice, Antoine de Bourbon, King of Navarre, first Prince of the Blood, had the best claim. The Bourbons play a great part in the story of the Guises, and I will make a slight digression to introduce them. Their province, the Bourbonnais, lies almost in the centre of France, just north of Auvergne. Its chief town is Moulins, and if you go into the sacristy of the church there, and tip liberally a grudging sacristan, he will unfold the wings of a triptych painted about 1497 by an unknown painter, a sort of Frenchified Fleming, known as the Maître de Moulins. This picture depicts the Madonna in the centre; kneeling on one side is Pierre II, Duc de Bourbon, and on the other are his wife, Anne de Beaujeu, daughter to Louis XI, and their little daughter Suzanne. This little girl married her cousin, the Constable Bourbon, the traitor. The Bourbons were very great people. The family history goes back to the ninth century. In the thirteenth a daughter of the house married the sixth son of Louis IX, Saint Louis. By failure of issue in other branches, Louis, Count of Vendôme (died 1446) became head of the family, and from him



The so-called Jean Goujon Diana



the families of Condé, Conti and Montpensier were descended. The Constable's treason, if it was such, towards François Premier left the family under a cloud for a generation. But bygones became bygones, and Antoine de Bourbon married Jeanne d'Albret, daughter to Queen Marguerite of Navarre, the sister of François Premier. He had two brothers, the ineffectual Cardinal de Bourbon and Louis, Prince de Condé, a man of diminutive body but great spirit. Had Antoine possessed a strong character, he could have played an important part in public affairs, but he was vain, weak and changeable, and nobody had any confidence in his steadiness or judgment.

Then, in this choice of King's counsellor, there was the Constable, Anne de Montmorency. His great office, and his long experience of public affairs, first under François Premier, and latterly under Henri II, under whom he had virtually been prime minister, gave him hopes that he would continue to direct the royal policy. And it is possible that if he and Antoine could have co-operated with one another they might have made good their claims to take a part, at least, in public affairs. But the Constable was a crusty old fellow, and Antoine was indignant because in negotiating the treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis the Constable and his fellow commissioners had ignored his claim to Spanish Navarre.

These two candidates, however, were promptly disposed of by the power behind the throne. The beautiful young Queen ruled her husband, and she was wholly under the influence of her two uncles, the Duke of Guise and the Cardinal of Lorraine. Like all the Guises, she had a strong family feeling, and she was fond of her handsome uncles, she trusted them, and they understood her. Scotland was alien to her, she was really a daughter of France, and a Guise, and, as a matter of course, called them to power. So when, according to custom, a deputation from the Parlement waited upon the new King to congratulate him and express their loyal feelings, he announced to them that his two uncles would have complete charge of everything, and he bade Parlement to

obey them as it would obey himself. The Duke had command of the armies and the Cardinal of finance. The Cardinal was virtually Prime Minister. The Tuscan ambassador wrote home, "The Cardinal of Lorraine is Pope and King in France." Probably the great majority of the King's subjects approved of the appointment of the Guises, "*comme très bien leur appartenait pour en estre très dignes et très capables.*" And, indeed, there could be no hesitation. François de Guise was the first soldier in France, and though for the time there was peace, who could say how long it would last? He was gracious, courteous and affable, and bore himself with a sort of magnificent simplicity. He probably had the same kind of charm and physical beauty that young Queen Mary, his niece, possessed; and the Cardinal, if not personally so richly endowed with graces, was a master of social arts, cultivated, quick-witted, immensely industrious and extremely able.

Nevertheless the Constable did not give way without an attempt to retain his place. Immediately after the King was wounded he bade the Bourbons take the government; and on the King's death he hurried to the Louvre and counselled the Queen Mother to inspire her son with the best maxims of good government for his people; not to let him fall into a prejudice against any of his subjects, or listen to friends of inferior standards, rather have him so act that his conduct would be approved by the noblesse and the other orders of the realm, and that, therefore, he should not change the officers of state, or deprive any man of his position or dignity, and that she must remember that she was to govern a nation which readily obeyed its own Kings and Princes, but resented indignantly the domination of foreigners. Then he made a most humble obeisance and assured her of his inviolable attachment to the King and to herself. The Queen Mother must have smiled inwardly at the Constable's elephantine attempts at subtlety; she listened graciously, made many flattering promises, some say she shed tears, but she bore in mind his former friendliness to Diane de Poitiers.

However, quite apart from their obvious fitness, the Duke and

the Cardinal were secure in the affections of their beautiful niece, and they were deferential to the Queen, and devoted themselves seriously to the business of the government. They endeared themselves also to Catherine de Médicis by consenting to the dismissal of Diane de Poitiers, in spite of her being mother-in-law to their brother, the Duc d'Aumale. There was nothing base or mean in this; it was a matter of course that on the death of a King his mistress should give up the jewels bestowed upon her by her royal lover, she could only hope for the use of them during his life. Diana was over sixty now, and retirement from an alien court could have been no hardship. She was rich, she retained the Château of Anet, and was of a character sufficient unto itself.

So the Guises assumed the government of France. The King was of legal age, but he had no taste for affairs. Excepting his beautiful wife, hunting was all he cared for, and he hunted more than was good for his health. The King and the Cardinal both treated the Queen Mother with great respect; she was invited to the councils of state, and the wording of public acts began, "It being the good pleasure of the Queen my Mother"; but whatever the glove, the hand was the hand of the Cardinal. The rule of the Guises, however, was not popular with the noblesse. The noblesse regarded them, for they made much of their descent from Kings of Lorraine, as foreigners, and the Constable's relatives, his friends and followers were angry that he had been superseded; he had so long been a conspicuous figure in national life that, in spite of his slow mind, his irascible temper and his self-seeking, he had become a sort of institution, and many felt that to lose him from the government was like cutting down the mainmast. There were also the old-fashioned people who had an inordinate respect for the blood royal, and believed, as part of their patriotic creed, that Princes of the Blood should be at the head of the government so long as the King was too young and inexperienced to take control. There were also a great number of gentleman adventurers, old soldiers, persons who had found employment of one kind and another during the

war with Spain, who now, having nothing to do, flocked to Fontainebleau to obtain the rewards of their faithful, loyal and arduous services, as ex-soldiers are wont to do. The Cardinal had a mind to balance the budget, and to do that expenses must be cut, so he said it was impossible to provide for these worthies, and, upon their persistence, showed his spirit—quite different from democratic politicians—by erecting a gibbet and issuing a statement that it would be put to use, if his orders continued to be disobeyed. Brantôme says: “It was twice proclaimed throughout the court, to the sound of trumpets, that all captains, soldiers, military men or others, who had come to ask for money or rewards, must take themselves away, upon pain of death,” and an explanation was given that the State was greatly in debt, to the Venetians, to the Swiss, to private bankers and so on. Brantôme comments: “Soldiers are always like that; for a little bullet wound, or a slight service rendered, they think the King should dish out gold in shovelfuls. I have seen very many like that, becoming malcontent, assert their valiancy, swearing, cursing, and alleging their services, in short making an elephant out of a fly. That is why the importunity of these fellows angered the King, his financial advisers, and all the court.”

Then he adds, “but the Duc de Guise showed himself more considerate to the soldiers, for he knew their ways. And when they came to court he was very gracious, even to the least of them (as I have seen), and I remember to have seen many come, who knew nothing of the proclamation, and, whether they did or not, he would whisper in their ear, ‘Better go away now for a time, my friend. Haven’t you heard of the proclamation? Go away. The King is very poor just now. But be sure that when the sky is clear again, and occasion presents itself, I shan’t forget you. I’ll send for you.’”

But in spite of the Duke’s tact this bold ordinance raised up many enemies to the Cardinal. Young musketeers, Athoses, Porthoses, and Aramises, eager to enjoy life, and angry to have the

wars end, vowed vengeance. Besides, in the background, there were the Huguenot churches, constituting themselves into what inevitably became a political body; they took an attitude somewhat similar to that of our southern states before the Civil War, that they must keep and maintain their peculiar institution, and if thwarted they would secede, or at least have a separate government of their own. All these elements, animated by their several motives, were opposed to the Guises, whom they always stigmatized as foreigners, in spite of the fact that their mother was a Bourbon, that they had as much royal French blood in their veins as the King of Navarre, and that their father had been a naturalized Frenchman, and that François de Guise had married the granddaughter of King Louis XII. They accused the Guises of battening on the land, although the House of Montmorency had battened still more, and all nobles battened as much as they could. On the side of the Guises were the King, the young Queen, the Queen Mother, the Church, most of the *noblesse de la robe*, and the great majority of law-abiding people, who were faithful Catholics, and thought very ill of the Huguenots, as rebellious, immoral and brutal. This antagonism between the Guisards and the anti-Guisards broke out in the beginning of February, 1560.

The King's health was poor, and as medical opinion declared that the air at Blois, in Touraine (which province Rabelais calls the Garden of France), would be beneficial, the Court went there; and the King was pleased because there were great forests round about, delightful to hunt in. The malcontents chose this time to hatch a plot against the Guises. Most of the plotters were Huguenots, but the passion that caused the fire came mainly from disgruntled adventurers. Of these the most conspicuous was Godefroy de Barry, de la Renaudie, a gentleman of Périgord. I borrow from Mr. Ralph Roeder two judgments upon him, in order to show the difference between Calvin's and the Duke's Christianity, for the test of Christianity lies in thinking no evil. Calvin said he was "a man full of vanity and presumption, empty-bellied, roaming

everywhere for prey, an impudent liar, in search of money to extort and friendships to exploit." The Duke said he was "a man of handsome life and good company and great intelligence, but who has always been ill employed and who lacks judgment." This man, when engaged in a lawsuit, had forged certain documents, and, being detected, had been condemned to pay a large fine, and banished for a time. In Switzerland he became a Protestant. On his return to France, he plunged into a conspiracy against the Guises. It is said that he had a private grudge against them. He got together a great meeting of the malcontents at Nantes, which posed as a sort of States-General, representing the nation, and unfolded to them his plan. They should arm themselves (in spite of a royal edict to the contrary), separate in little bands, and converge upon Blois; some in civilian dress should enter the town and be ready to open the gates, and when the town was in their hands they would remove the Guises and present a petition of grievances to the King. He announced that there was a chief in high place who, upon success, would put himself at their head. This mysterious person was the Prince de Condé, and, though the facts are doubtful, it seems highly probable that he knew of the plot and sympathized with it, but would join it no further than by a promise to reap the benefit when it was a success. La Renaudie wanted to strengthen his cause with the name, hinted at, if not spoken out, of a Prince of the Blood.

There can be no doubt that the conspirators meant to kill the Duc de Guise and his brother the Cardinal. But rumours of these doings got abroad. Warning came from Germany and elsewhere, and finally a Parisian lawyer, a Protestant, to whom the plot had been confided, being troubled in conscience, went and told the Cardinal. When definite news came, the Court had already left Blois and was on its way towards Amboise. As that was a well-walled town with a stout castle, the Court stopped there and took counsel. On the advice of the Duc de Guise, the Queen Mother invited Coligny and his brothers to join them, probably for the

sake of securing them as hostages. The Prince de Condé came, too. Coligny advised conciliation towards the Huguenots, amnesty for the past, freedom of worship and the convocation of an Ecclesiastical Council. His advice was adopted in part, and an edict issued, granting pardon to those who would live as good Catholics in the future, but excepting conspirators and mischief-makers. The Duc de Guise appointed the Prince de Condé warden of one of the castle gates, but took care to give him the young Guise, the *Grand Prieur*, as lieutenant, and surround him with his own men.

The conspirators were disarranged in their plans by the Court's removal from Blois to Amboise, and from that time everything went wrong with them. Traitors revealed their movements; a band of them was captured in a fortified house; an attack on the castle was repulsed; La Renaudie was killed. The Duke's cavalry scattered the assembling forces, and the peasants fell upon the stragglers. Many were killed on the spot, many were drowned and many were hanged from the windows and battlements of the castle. The punishments were cruel, but it is plain that there was general terror. A King, young or old, does not like to be kidnapped; nor does a young Queen, from a foreign land, like to have her uncles murdered; nor does a Queen Mother like to have her son kidnapped, and his chief ministers murdered; and the conspirators' declared purpose to do away with foreigners might be stretched to apply to an Italian, or a Scotch, woman, as well as to descendants of the House of Lorraine. The conspirators talked very piously under examination, they meant no harm to the King's person, merely to remove his unworthy servants. But they were rebels with arms in their hands, and many of them were discarded soldiers, adventurers or ruffians sharked up all over France; and a mingling of devout Huguenots could not alter the fact that such men, in success, do not waste time on law, order, or niceties of obedience and ceremony. The King's letter to Anne de Montmorency probably gives an accurate account of his view of the affair:

“This abominable treason aimed at the subversion of the State. If that had happened, We, our very honored Lady and Mother, our dear and beloved companion the Queen, our brother, and princes who have the chief management of our affairs would have been snuffed out (*estainctz*), or, at least, reduced to such a state that the royal authority would be degraded and at the mercy of a subject.”

Accused persons, under examination, have a tendency to see their frustrated purposes in a crepuscular softness of outline, and these conspirators asserted that their intentions befitted sucking doves. Some prisoners, during torture, implicated the Prince de Condé. His coffers were searched, but nothing compromising was found. He demanded to be heard. In presence of all the Court, he declared that if any man dared to charge him with disloyalty, or with tempting the King’s subjects to commit any crime against the person of the King, he would lay his rank aside and challenge him to personal combat. At this the Duc de Guise stepped forward and exclaimed that the Prince was right to be offended, and said that he could have no greater pleasure than to act as the Prince’s second. Condé thanked him and thanked the Cardinal. There can be no doubt, however, that Condé was privy to the plot. The motives of the Guises in accepting Condé’s denial can only be guessed at; perhaps they thought it unwise to attack a Prince of the Blood, or that the evidence was insufficient to satisfy the public, or they may have hoped that now he would acquiesce in their rule; perhaps they were magnanimous, or they may have been satisfied with their success—they had saved the King from constraint by Huguenot rebels, perhaps they had saved the Kingdom from dismemberment. Catholics were full of praise and gratitude, and the Parlement de Paris acted as the public mouthpiece in decreeing to the Duc de Guise the title *Saviour of the Country*.

But in those days a man could not save his country without danger. One of the conspirators executed by the Duke’s orders



French Renaissance Sculpture: A Nymph by Jean Goujon



was a Seigneur de Castelnau of Bigorre, and a nephew of his, Captain Bonnegarde, an acquaintance of Brantôme, who says he was a very gallant soldier, vowed vengeance. Some three years afterwards he appeared at Court in the train of the Prince de Condé, and boasted on several occasions that he would kill M. de Guise. The Duke heard of this, and, without further evidence of interest, asked to have Bonnegarde pointed out to him. He looked and merely remarked, "That man will never kill me." At Saint-Germain, a few days later, he had Bonnegarde watched to see when he and a friend of his should be walking in the park. He did not have long to wait. His servant told him that the two gentlemen were in the park. "The Duke took with him young La Brosse, a very valiant gentleman, son to M. de La Brosse [I am quoting Brantôme], a truly honorable Knight, and the two, without other escort, neither page, nor lackey, followed the others. They came up with them after they had made their turn and were on their way back. M. de Guise said, 'Here are our men. Don't make any hostile move, unless I do.' And therewith he walked straight towards them, with an assured look that showed that he was ready to kill. It was M. Bonnegarde and his companion that stepped back and made room for M. de Guise to pass. They stood to one side, took off their bonnets, and bowed to him most respectfully. M. de Guise stopped a moment, then went on to the turn, making his little promenade after the others, without betraying the slightest emotion, or saying anything except, 'We have done it well, La Brosse; my friend will not kill me; he is more respectful and polite than they reported. But I swear to you that if he had not taken off his hat I would have killed him dead, while you were killing your man. In such matters, one must proceed prudently; they have showed themselves, and they will never kill us.' When the Prince de Condé heard of the incident, he said that the Duke's behaviour was admirable, and made all possible excuses to M. de Guise, saying that the Duke had been given wrong information. All M. de Guise said was, "When that rascal wants to, he can find

me at any time." Some were amazed that M. de Guise did not kill him; but he answered that he felt better revenged by this humble satisfaction than if he had killed him.

A man's nerves received careful training in those times. That was the end of M. de Bonnegarde's vengeance for the death of his uncle; but the Conspiracy of Amboise, a plot that must be charged to the Huguenots' account, was the beginning of thirty years and more of bloody contention.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE COUNCIL AT FONTAINEBLEAU

THE Conspiracy of Amboise stands out like a great rock to mark the beginning of a long stretch of forty years of destruction and desolation. Many motives animated the widespread groups of conspirators, one of the strongest being jealousy of the Guises, of their abilities, of their success,—the Duke crowned with the laurels of Metz and Calais, the Cardinal seemingly on the road to the Tiara—of their charm, of their beauty (for, as a lady said, the Guises make everybody else look like plebeians). There was jealousy, too, of their popularity; for they had numerous partisans, who admired them extravagantly. I quote Ronsard again:

*Allez, Lauriers, environner les têtes  
Des deux Lorrains, à l'un pour son sçavoir  
Comme à Mercure, à l'autre pour avoix,  
Ainsi que Mars, tant gagné de conquêtes.*

Go, Laurels, hang in garlands on the brow  
Of the two Lorrains, one for learning  
The peer of Mercury in his discerning,  
The other for his victories, like Mars, I trow.

But apart from the rivalries between the *Connétablistes* and the *Guisards*, apart from the malcontents and the adventurers, it became clear that the dissatisfactions and ambitions of the Huguenots were the fundamental causes of the Conspiracy, and that, therefore, the religious question was of most pressing urgency. Christendom was rent in pieces. Great principalities in Germany had broken away from the Papacy; England, Sweden, Norway, Den-

mark, had undone the ancient knots of the common faith, and now the problem of secession in France thrust itself before the King's ministers. Should they repress heresy by main force, and crush it, as the Spaniards had done, or should they recognize its right to exist, to thrive, to grow, until, as in Germany, the Kingdom should be divided into hostile camps? Harsh measures had been tried; so far they had not succeeded. Punishment had roused anger and desire for vengeance, it had welded the Huguenots together and made of them a political body to which all disgruntled men rallied, all who wished to fish in muddy waters, all who hoped to benefit by new things. But the idea of religious toleration, familiar to the Romans and to us, was alien to the masses on both sides, and it was very difficult to know what was the wise course to pursue.

The citizens of Paris were particularly intolerant of the reformers. Regnier de la Planche, a Huguenot of plentiful prejudices himself, says: "The Parisian populace showed itself most venomously angry with the evangelicals. That populace is composed of people from everywhere, of insubordinate disposition, and the theologians of the Sorbonne, together with the monks, stirred them up by their sermons and inflamed them against the Reformed doctrine, saying that these sectaries were godless people who had no religion, and charging them with all sorts of crimes. This put the populace in such a fury against the evangelicals that many among them at an execution would push the public executioners aside, in order to torture the victims more terribly. . . . And they invented various ways to detect who were evangelical. Besides their usual habit of assaulting those who did not kneel when priests carried the Host through the streets, they set up images of the Virgin Mary on street corners . . . and if a passer-by did not take off his hat, he was immediately attacked by men in ambush from the neighboring houses. They also put up little boxes to contain coins for buying candles and lights, and obliged the passer-by to contribute, and if he made the slightest objection they cudgelled him.

And they went about collecting money for such services, and to pay for prosecuting Lutherans; and any refusal, or hesitation, led to murder and pillage." The people of Paris were not alone in their violent hatred of the innovators, and statesmen had to take this very widespread indignation into account. The hatred of the populace naturally aroused the counter hatred of the Huguenots, and insults and angry words flew to and fro. As a sample of Huguenot invective, I cite a *Letter to the Tiger of France*, which denounced the Cardinal of Lorraine:

"Mad Tiger, venomous Viper, Sepulchre of abomination! . . . How long will you abuse the King's youth? Will you never put an end to your boundless ambition, to your impostures and your thefts? Detestable monster! Everybody knows you, everybody sees through you, and yet you still live. . . . Release us from your tyranny! Avoid the executioner's sword! Get out!"

Many such letters followed. The Cardinal merely replied, "Calumny is lame, and limps along, and in the end causes more shame to its authors than it does hurt to those to whom it is addressed." His partisans comforted him by praising him and his brothers to the skies—"Two powerful props accorded by Providence to our Kingdom"—and hurled back the insults with vigor. It is difficult to ascertain how much the Constable and the Bourbons excited this hatred of the Guises; and also to understand why the charge that they were foreigners was made so violently. The Guises were really as much Frenchmen, as loyal to France in their hearts as any one, certainly as much so as the Bourbons—for Antoine's first desire was for his Kingdom of Navarre, and Condé was willing to divide France in halves between Catholics and Huguenots—or as Montmorency, who was all-absorbed in his own restitution to power.

This antagonism added to the difficulties of government, for the first business of a government is to keep itself in power. But the

Guises confronted the situation with an open mind, and decided to try a policy of gentleness towards the Huguenots. They appointed Michel l'Hôpital, a just, temperate, gentle-hearted, upright man, who has been likened to Sir Thomas More, as Chancellor. They had long known his qualities, and had recommended him to Henri II for the office of *Maître des requêtes*, a judicial position, and again for membership in the royal Council. And he, an honorable man, as all agree, greatly admired the Guises, as his Latin verses still attest, so much so that unsympathetic persons were displeased with his appointment on the ground that he was too much a friend of the Cardinal. The Guises, also, for they were in power, must have the credit of the *Edict of Romorantin* (May, 1560), which has the reputation of leniency and wisdom; it transferred the trial of heresy from the lay judges to the bishops, and conferred jurisdiction of the offenses of unlawful assemblies and conventicles upon the judges, thus preventing laymen from a consideration of a theological matter, and prejudiced churchmen from that of statutory offenses. And they consented to a meeting of Notables, where their policies should be discussed.

This meeting was held at the Palace of Fontainebleau on August 20, 1560. At the opening, before the regular business was taken up, Admiral Coligny went to the King with a petition in his hand, and said that on a recent trip to Normandy he had inquired with particularity as to the cause of the troubles and hard feelings there, and he had learned that there was no ill will towards the King or towards the Kingdom, but that the greatest source of discontent proceeded from the extreme persecution of the Reformed religion, although there had never been a judicial investigation and judgment upon it. That members of the Reformed party offered to prove that their doctrines and ceremonies were in entire conformity with those of the Holy Scriptures and the traditions of the Primitive Church. He believed, he said, he was doing what would be agreeable to His Majesty in taking their request and promising to present it, so that His Majesty might consider, together with

his Council in this notable assembly, what steps should be taken to restore quiet to the Kingdom. Such a petition, he knew, ought to be signed, but that could not be done till permission was granted to assemble, nevertheless the petitioners had assured him they could obtain fifty thousand signatures in Normandy alone.

His Majesty graciously received the petition, saying that he had such ample testimony of the Admiral's loyalty that he was sure zeal for the crown was his only motive. Thereupon he ordered the petition read. It stated that the petitioners were faithful Christians scattered over the Kingdom, they acknowledged the King as their Sovereign Lord appointed by God to reign over them, and were loyal subjects ready to pay the subsidies and taxes that it might please His Majesty to impose upon them, if what he ordinarily took was not enough. But, in like manner as the Holy Scriptures commanded them to bear the yoke of their kings in all obedience, so they were taught by God to render service and worship to Him without adding to, or detracting from, His Word, and not to consent to anything contrary to it. And in this respect, since they were not free to assemble and receive heavenly nourishment in public, they had been obliged to do so in secret and by night. And for that reason many calumnies had been put upon them; and, to avoid that, they humbly besought His Majesty to let them have chapels where they could preach the pure word of God and administer His Holy Sacrament, and begged him also to appoint commissioners to make a report on their lives and conduct.

By presenting this petition the Admiral declared that he made common cause with the Huguenots, and defied the Guises. His motives are not clear, probably they were mixed. He, his brothers, Cardinal de Châtillon (who wished to marry) and d'Andelot, and their half-sister Mme de Roye, were in sympathy with the new doctrines, but it is hard to believe that those sympathies were not powerfully quickened by jealousy and envy of the Guises. At any rate, when he sat down there was much *whispering* at his boldness. Nothing happened. The Chancellor arose and stated the reasons

for the meeting; then the Duc de Guise made a report on military matters, and the Cardinal on finance, stating that expenses exceeded income by 2,500,000 livres. And then, in order that no unconsidered words should be said or action taken, an adjournment of three days was had. On reassembling, eminent prelates, by the King's request, set forth their views upon the situation. After this the Admiral got up again, praised what had been said, and added that there was another matter more important than any, and that was the addition of new guards (which he knew had been done by the Duc de Guise) about the King's person. They ought not to be there, they only gave occasion to disorder, cost a great deal of money, and rendered the King's subjects suspicious and fearful, whereas the fact was that the people bore no ill will to His Majesty but only to his ministers.

At that the Duc de Guise got up, and, according to Regnier de la Planche (always very unjust to the Guises), showed so much passion against the Admiral that, instead of giving a considered opinion to the King, he did nothing but contradict what the Admiral had said. It was not the subjects' business, he vociferated, to instruct their King, especially as everybody knew that he was a most accomplished Prince. And if the King stood in need of advice, there was the Queen Mother, with the very best wisdom, to advise him. And as to the Admiral's assertion that the Huguenot petitioners could obtain fifty thousand signatures, or more, the King for his party could get a million. As for the new guards, the Duke had never thought of such a thing until the Conspiracy of Amboise, when the King's subjects took up arms against him, and he then decided that not again should the King be petitioned by subjects with arms in their hands. Besides, it was idle to say that they had not risen against their King, but against the ministers, for neither he nor his brother had ever offended anyone with respect to their private affairs, or given any private person cause for dislike. Even if the conspirators had acted because of some discontent with the administration of affairs, nevertheless

to take up arms against the ministers was really to take arms directly against the King. And he added (significantly) no reasons had since appeared why the new guards should be dismissed. As to the question of religion, he left that to men more learned in theology than he was. But for himself, no Councils could change his mind, or turn him from the ancient worship of his ancestors, particularly as to the holy sacraments. As for summoning the States-General, that was a matter for His Majesty to decide.

Regnier de la Planche says that the Duke spoke with great passion and manifested his hate of the Admiral; a feeling that was cordially reciprocated. The Duke habitually showed so much calmness and self-control that it seems highly likely that Regnier de la Planche's statement was colored by his Huguenot prejudices; but he was perfectly right in his conclusion that the Admiral and the Duke stood forth, henceforward, not merely as champions of their respective causes but also as bitter personal enemies. After the Duke had finished, the Cardinal de Lorraine got up and spoke quietly and without passion. The petitioners, he said, were far from being loyal and obedient; they alleged that they were, but it was plain that they would be loyal and obedient only upon condition that the King did what they wanted. As to granting them chapels, that would be to approve of heresy, and the King could not do that without danger of eternal damnation. He doubted the value of another theological Council; it could only reassert what many Councils had asserted before. As to the pious zeal of the petitioners, it was easy to estimate that by the defamatory libels they issued every day; there were twenty-two such, aimed at him, now lying on his table. And he regarded the reprobation of such evil men as a great honor, and a eulogy upon his life that would render him immortal. His conclusion was that the seditious, especially those who took up arms, should be severely punished; but as to those who, out of fear of damnation, did not go to Mass, but instead went, unarmed, to hear preaching, sing psalms and such, since punishment had so far done no good, he

advised that no more punishments should be inflicted, and, for his part, he was very sorry that there had been such harsh executions. He only wished that his life or death might be of help to these poor errant wanderers. And he ended by advising the convocation of the States-General. Regnier de la Planche makes the marginal comments, "Crocodile tears," "Enemy of truth," etc. It was hardly possible for anyone to be just, fair or reasonable.

The Admiral's defiance of the Duc de Guise was like flinging down a glove; it meant that he and his party were ready for battle. In Normandy the Protestants still talked loyalty, but in the south they had abandoned all pretense, they sacked churches, they destroyed statues, they fought the King's troops. The Prince de Condé most certainly supported them in rebellion. His brother Antoine plotted to seize the city of Lyons, then he became afraid, hesitated, drew back, and stood shilly-shallying, facing both ways, undecided what to do. Catherine de Médicis, in alarm, wrote to Philip of Spain for help. The Guises were confronted by actual civil war and were forced to act. A command was sent to the King of Navarre to come to court and bring the Prince de Condé, with the warning that if they did not come voluntarily the King knew how to make himself obeyed.

The Bourbons dared not disobey. They went slowly and reluctantly to Orléans where the States-General were to meet. Reports of what happened are uncertain. Regnier de La Planche says, in substance: When the Princes entered the city and approached the palace where the King lodged, Antoine, according to the privilege of Princes of the Blood, wished to ride into the courtyard. He was unceremoniously told that the great door would not be opened and that he must enter by the wicket. Accompanied by their brother the Cardinal de Bourbon and their cousin the Prince de la Roche-sur-Yon, they went into the King's presence, and found him attended by the Guises and many of the nobility. No one moved forward to greet them. They advanced and made their obeisance to the King, and met with a chilling reception. The

King led them into his mother's apartment, but the Guises did not enter. The Queen Mother, according to La Planche, shed crocodile tears, and the King upbraided Condé, stated that he had been told that the Prince had entered into various enterprises against him and the Kingdom, and he therefore wished to hear the truth from his own mouth.

The Prince had no lack of courage, and defended himself with vigor; he vowed that the accusations were calumnies invented by his enemies the Guises, whom he charged with all sorts of crimes, and gave the reasons why they slandered him to His Majesty. Nevertheless, the King ordered the captain of his guard to arrest him. The Prince was then conveyed into a house strongly locked and guarded, with no company other than his valet. Antoine was left nominally at large, but under constant surveillance. He was greatly frightened and went about, hat in hand, begging the Cardinal of Lorraine to save his brother's life, and demanding heavy punishment against the other rebels. But Condé, behind his grilled window, shouted out loud, to guards, soldiers, anyone within hearing, his hatred of the Guises. A special tribunal was appointed. The charges against him were of a wide range—to seize Poitiers, Tours, Orléans, Lyons, then to march on the Court, arrest the Guises for high treason, and take the government into his own hands, and so on. The evidence left no doubt of his guilt, and the Prince was condemned to death. The sentence was set for December 10.

Then Fate intervened. The King fell ill, his frail body gave way under too violent exercises. One day, just before starting on a hunt, he fainted in church. He grew worse. He was very ill, and death drew near. The Guises ordered masses, and prayers, and processions, but these availed no more than medicine. Their power, perhaps their lives, depended upon his life. The Heir Apparent, his brother Charles, was but ten years old and would be wholly under his mother's control, and who could read Catherine de Médicis's character? She had developed rapidly since her husband's death;

she desired power, and to put her Medicean gifts of tact, diplomacy, duplicity and intrigue to use.

While the poor young King lay dying, a drama of ambitions was played about his bed. The Constable, delighted at the prospect of the fall of the Guises, started for Orléans in order to take advantage of the situation, but lost courage, feigned illness and withdrew. Catherine, whatever her grief for her son, was soon absorbed in the excitement of securing the regency. The popular feeling that the Princes of the Blood should direct the government during a minority was very strong, and the Salic law, by its implication of the unfitness of women to rule, supported that view; on the other hand, there was a strong precedent in her favor, Blanche of Castile had been regent during the minority of Saint Louis. Besides, the States-General was about to meet, and who could tell what they would do? They had not met for eighty years, and at their last meeting strange words had been uttered about the sovereignty of the people. Evidently the question of the regency must be decided before the King should die. The Guises were well aware that they would be far safer with Catherine, whom they had always treated with respect, as regent, than under Antoine de Bourbon.

On December 2, Catherine summoned the latter to her room; the two Guises and some other members of the Council were present. As Antoine was about to enter, a lady whispered that he had better consent or all was up with him. The Queen upbraided and warned him, the Bourbon plots were well known, his complicity indubitable, but there lay before him one way of escape: he should renounce whatever claim he might have to the regency and acquiesce in her right to the office, and then he would be rewarded with the office of Lieutenant-General, and nothing would be done without the approval of the Princes of the Blood. The pact was made; and the Queen explained to him that it was not the Guises, but the King himself, who had set on foot the prosecution of the Prince de Condé. Antoine accepted the expla-

nation; he and the Guises embraced, agreed to forget the past and be fast friends for the future.

Three days later the poor little King lay dead. Malice alleged that the Queen Mother "was blyeth of the death of King Francis his sone, because she had no guiding of him." Théodore de Bèze, the Protestant divine, cried exultingly, "Behold the Lord our God has awakened and removed that boy!" Coligny said, "The King is dead, this means life to us." And, on going to his apartment, he sat with a toothpick in his mouth as was his custom, and, stretching his feet towards the fire, fell into a profound reverie and did not notice that his boots were scorching. His gentleman-in-waiting, suddenly perceiving they were all but on fire, shook him by the arm, and cried, "Sir, you are dreaming too much, your boots are burning, don't do it." "Ah, Fontaines," the Admiral answered, "not a week ago you and I would have been glad to get out of this at the price of a leg, and today we get out for a pair of boots. It's a good bargain." All the Huguenots were overjoyed. Pasquinades flew about: "O Cardinal of Lorraine! O Lucifer! how art thou fallen from Heaven," "O Duke, take up thy bed and walk!" etc. It was true enough, by the boy's death the Guises had lost the government of France. Condé was saved.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE THEOLOGICAL CHASM

CHARLES IX was a child of ten, wholly in his mother's control. To make assurance of his docility doubly sure, she slept in his room. Catherine de Médicis had been starving for power, for opportunity to use her talents in diplomacy, intrigue and duplicity, and now she had room and to spare. The States-General had accomplished nothing. Troubles multiplied, the Huguenots were gaining in numbers and power all the time. Most of the gentry of the south and west, and many nobles of great estate, had joined them. With their growth in power and numbers their self-assertion increased, and also the dislike and fear of them. Riots and conflicts took place almost all over France. In Paris, always strongly Catholic, *la ville sanguinaire et meutrière entre toutes celles du monde* (as Théodore de Bèze called her), when the Huguenots attempted to hold one of their psalm-singing conventicles in the Pré-aux-clercs, the Catholic students of the Latin Quarter broke in upon them and chased them away. Huguenots were then comparatively numerous in that part of the city from the Tour de Nesle to the Rue de Vaugirard, and they were not disposed to follow the injunction of turning the other cheek. A report went about that a band of Catholic children was going, in spite of prohibitions, to march through the streets of that quarter of the town on Corpus Christi, carrying crucifixes and holy images, and that the Huguenots meant to stop them. The Court, in great alarm, sent messengers flying on one another's heels to fetch the Parisian idol, the Duc de Guise, to come and prevent a riot. The Duke, aggrieved at Catherine's policy of friendliness to the Huguenots, answered curtly, "If it

were any other matter, I would not go; but since it concerns the honor of God, I will. And if it happens that I am killed, I could not die better." He rode posthaste to his hôtel in the city, to the great joy of the Catholic citizens. Crowds of gentlemen hurried to join him. He dressed himself in doublet and hose of crimson satin—crimson was his favorite color—threw a cloak of black velvet over his shoulders, donned a bonnet of the same with a red feather, fastened a dagger in his belt and a sword at his side, mounted his handsome jennet, by name *Le Moret*, caparisoned with black velvet housing embroidered with silver, and, accompanied by three or four hundred gentlemen, rode through the town, amid the cheers of the populace, to the Abbey of Saint-Germain where the King was lodged. The Huguenots were overawed, and the procession of children was not disturbed.

Elsewhere there was greater trouble. At Beauvais the Cardinal de Châtillon, though much beloved by the people of his bishopric, ran the risk of his life because, instead of celebrating Mass on Easter Day in the cathedral dedicated to St. Peter, as his predecessors had done, he had it celebrated in the chapel of his palace by a Reformed minister. The Cardinal was present and took communion with bread and wine, as did his household and some citizens of the towns. News of this got abroad quickly and spread through the city. The lowest orders of society were so excited and scandalized that some young men, especially those that earned their livelihood in the woolen trade, and were not at work now on account of the holidays, marched about the town and broke into several houses. One of these houses belonged to a priest who was suspected of teaching children the prayers and catechism of the new religion. These rowdies dragged him out of his house, killed him and dragged his body to the city square (where executions were held), with the intention of burning it. On hearing the tumult the sheriff ran out, forbade the murderers to proceed as if they were usurping his jurisdiction, took possession of the body and, with the applause of the maddened populace, burned it as if

there had been a judicial sentence. A number of people, excited by this spectacle, surrounded the Episcopal Palace—which had, for some time, been fortified with towers and stout walls against just such uprisings. They clamored to see their Bishop. When he appeared at a window, clad in his Cardinal's robes, their fury subsided, and the coming of night dispersed them. The next day the nobles of the neighborhood arrived in the city, and their presence restored peace and order (De Thou).

It was very similar in other Catholic cities; but in the south, where the Huguenots had the upper hand, they gave tit for tat. They murdered priests, and sacked churches. They continued to make proselytes everywhere, even at Court. The Princess de Condé, the Duchess of Ferrara (the Duc de Guise's mother-in-law) and Admiral Coligny held Protestant services in their apartments, at which a Genevan minister officiated. The orthodox Catholic chiefs became greatly alarmed; all that they held sacred, all they cared for most, all that their patriotism, their honor, their eternal salvation, called on them to defend, was in peril. Fear made strange bedfellows. The old Constable, the Duc de Guise and the Maréchal de Saint-André laid aside rivalries and animosities, and took counsel together to see what could be done. These orthodox three became so close and powerful that their union was called the Triumvirate (April, 1561), and all sorts of rumours as to what they planned to do flew about. It was asserted that they had a secret pact, that they had invited King Philip of Spain to be their head, that they meant to force the King of Navarre, the turncoat, to become orthodox. First they were going to dangle before his eyes the hope of recovering his lost Spanish provinces, or promise him compensation, and then, if he still refused, drive him from his kingdom by the aid of a Spanish army; and if the Huguenots rose to help him the Duc de Guise would levy a Catholic army, destroy the Bourbons and extirpate heresy in France, while at the same time the Duke of Savoy would destroy Geneva, and the German Catholics suppress the Lutherans, and so on, and so on.



French Renaissance Sculpture: Madonna at Écuen



The Queen Mother, whose one desire was to hold power herself and preserve the throne of her son, and who had watchfully tried to keep a balance between the parties, was as much troubled as the Huguenots. She questioned the Duc de Guise about the rumours. He answered that he was ready to submit to an investigation by the Parlement de Paris, and be punished if he was wrong in doing what he had done. She then asked him whether, in case she and her son, the King, should adopt the new religion, which they were not at all thinking of doing, he and his brothers would renounce their allegiance. The Duke replied that "so long as the King and the Queen followed in the footsteps of their predecessors, he and his brothers would die in their service; he had no purpose other than to maintain the Catholic religion in the Kingdom and the crown on the King's head, for if religion were lost he could see distinctly the broad road that led to the destruction of King and Kingdom, to both of which he was bound by so many obligations."

The Cardinal of Lorraine made his attitude equally clear. He was now the most illustrious prelate in France, so much so that his name has sometimes been coupled with those of Richelieu and Mazarin as a great Cardinal-Minister of the Crown. As Archbishop of Reims he had been a conscientious administrator; he drained unhealthy marshes and converted them into gardens and meadows, he brought timber from his own forest at Joinville for buildings in the town, so that people said he had found a city of clay and left it of oak; he founded a university there, a theological college, a seminary and a monastery; he presided over provincial councils, and saw, or tried to see, that parish priests in his archiepiscopal diocese discharged the duties of their office; and he showed the greatest zeal in all his ecclesiastical functions, kept neither hounds nor hawks, and at every Easter withdrew into a retreat for spiritual exercises. He looked as a great prelate should, his intelligent forehead was broad and high and his bearing distinguished, and he was eloquent in his discourses and agreeable in

private talk. His enemies alleged that he was self-seeking, ambitious, indifferent as to the means that should accomplish his ends, ungenerous and disloyal, and strict in vengeance, but none of them disputed his pre-eminence, or his great abilities. As Archbishop of Reims he officiated at the coronation of the young King (May, 1561), and in his sermon exhorted him to keep in the straight path of orthodoxy, for "if he should change his sentiments his destruction would follow, and those that counselled him to change his religion would at the same time be plucking his crown from his head."

King Charles was never shaken, but his little brother Henry, aged ten, tried to convert his nine-year-old sister Margot to the new faith, and pulled away the prayer books that her devout guardians had put into her hands. The Queen Mother, true to her policy of balance and counterweights, made a valiant attempt at religious reconciliation. At Poissy, where the orthodox clergy were assembled, she invited a delegation of Huguenot ministers to come and debate the points in controversy, for as yet the Council of Trent had not definitely fixed the Catholic creed. Théodore de Bèze, sent by Calvin, spoke for his side. He was an admirable speaker, and all went well till he came to the doctrine of Transubstantiation, and then he said that the body and blood of Our Lord are as far from the bread and wine on the altar as the highest heaven is from the earth. The French cardinals were horrified. The Cardinal de Tournon, looking at the King and his mother, asked, "Did you hear that blasphemy?" and the Cardinal de Lorraine exclaimed in answer, "Would to God we had been deaf!" The Queen Mother reassured them; she said that she and the King would live and die in the Catholic faith.

The Cardinal de Lorraine was chosen to state the orthodox position. He was very adroit, and persuasive, and a firm believer in the tenets of his Church; he believed in monarchy both for State and Church, and that Protestantism was the enemy of both. He had no doubt of Transubstantiation, that through the priest's

consecration the bread and wine in the Eucharist are converted into the body and blood of Christ, as it is stated in Thomas Aquinas's glorious hymn:

*Verbum caro, panem verum  
Verbo carnem efficit,  
Fitque sanguis Christi merum.*

Perhaps in his subconscious mind he surmised that the Protestant rejection of Transubstantiation might be the crack that, slowly broadening, would split the sacred chalice of Christian tenets and spill all the contents. Surely he felt that the Protestant doctrine was materialistic, and raised an issue between the material and spiritual worlds. He spoke with great earnestness, dividing his discourse into two parts. The first dealt with the authority of the Church, the second with the Real Presence. In the first part he argued that Protestants stand on the finality of the Bible, written words of ancient time, fixed, static, unchangeable except by interpretation, while Catholics maintain that God continues to guide His Church, that truth marches down the ages manifesting itself in new aspects, through saints, through councils, through popes, forever explaining the immutable infinity of God; how, then, can it be right to secede from the Church, to sever oneself from the living manifestation of God?

In his second part he dwelt upon the doctrine of the Real Presence in the Eucharist. He based his argument on the words of the New Testament, "Take, eat, this is my body," and on the universal agreement of Christendom, the Roman Church, the Greek Church, even the Lutheran. "Indeed," he said, "the manner in which Our Saviour presents Himself to us, gives Himself, is received and is partaken of, is a mystery, not human, not according to nature, but none the less true. We do not accept it by the senses, nor by reason, nor by nature, but by Faith. Is it then better to believe in the words of Our Lord in so holy a matter, or to proffer the Hebraic words, *How so?*—words of disbelief and perdition?

Faith is necessary, reason superfluous; science is founded on reason, Faith is founded on authority." And he went on to argue that curiosity, the itch to enter into super-subtle questions, was the cause of innumerable errors in this matter, and that it was dangerous, in explaining this mystery, to depart from the interpretation accepted by the Church.

"It is," he said, "a mystery to be adored, that God has instituted to unite us more intimately with Him; and if we let curiosity loose, that mystery will become a source of infinite disputes, and the bonds of love that ought to hold us tight together will break to bits. In fact, if the Protestants stubbornly adhere to their opinions—if they think that Jesus Christ since His ascension is not otherwise in the midst of us than as He was during His incarnation, that He has no other body now than His visible body, that He is no more in the bread and wine than in a sermon, that to receive Jesus Christ in the sacrament of baptism is the same as to receive His body and blood in the Eucharist, if they think that He is so completely in Heaven that He is no longer on earth, that He is no more in the Eucharist than in a scene of tragedy or in the mind (a comparison I take from a Lutheran)—if the Protestants do not renounce these errors, it will be impossible ever to be reconciled, and come to agreement with them. And if they have no other answer than what they have given, then I will make use of their own words and say that 'the highest heavens are not farther from the earth' than I am from their opinions."

Perhaps the Cardinal, whether right or wrong upon the dogma of Transubstantiation, was right in the belief that the Christian creed as accepted by the Mother Church, if it is to be maintained, must be maintained in its integrity; for if one dogma falls there is no security for the others; one by one they give way, and the whole Christian fabric falls to earth. Unwittingly the Calvinists, by their rejection of old dogmas, led the way to the complete rejection of Christianity. Even in our fathers' days it was a great sorrow to many when theological dogmas gave way before Darwin's theories,

and to the Cardinal of Lorraine the loss of the great dogma of Transubstantiation was a horror and a summons to arms. And he closed his address by beseeching, in the name of all bishops and Catholic theologians present, the whole Gallican Church to maintain the true doctrine even with their lives.

The Protestants would not budge, and nothing was gained. More and more it became apparent that the issues could be decided only by the sword.

## CHAPTER XVII

### VASSY

So MATTERS went on, rushing headlong to the catastrophe. The Queen Mother leaned now this way, now that, trying to keep the balance and be ultimately on the winning side. On the one hand the power of the Protestants was becoming disquietingly strong, on the other there was danger as to what Philip of Spain might do, for he was determined to keep Protestantism, which he regarded as the ecclesiastical aspect of rebellion, out of the Low Countries, and to that end he would not suffer France to turn Protestant. And, besides, Catherine wished to marry her daughter Marguerite to Don Carlos, Philip's son. It was very hard to stand on top of a rolling ball. The Duc de Guise, the Constable and the Maréchal de Saint-André were acting together, and the King of Navarre seemed to be about to join them; those four, backed by Spain, would make a dangerously strong party. Catherine called together deputies from all the Parlements of France to advise her. This body met and advised toleration. The Chancellor, l'Hôpital, accordingly drew up the Edict of January, 1562, which granted the Protestants not merely liberty of conscience but also liberty of worship outside of towns. That worship within walled towns was forbidden, is perfectly clear. The Edict reads:

*“Nous leur avons inhibé et défendu, inhibons et défendons par ces dites présentes . . . sur peine de la vie, et sans aucune espérance de grâce . . . de s’assembler dedans les villes pour y faire presches et prédications soit en public ou en privé, ny de jour, ny de nuict.*  
We have prohibited and forbidden, and by these presents we

prohibit and forbid . . . under pain of death, and without hope of pardon . . . any assembly within cities for service or preaching, whether in public or in private, by day or by night."

This the Huguenot churches fully understood, for they drew up an exposition of the Edict, in which Article III says,

*"Le troisième article défend de s'assembler de jour ou de nuit pour faire prescher dans les villes.* The third article forbids assemblies, day or night, for holding services in the cities."

The Catholics were indignant at the liberty granted. The Constable in dudgeon retired to his estates, the Duc de Guise to his. They affected to wash their hands of the whole matter. The Duke wrote to the Constable,

"I have begun to enjoy the pleasures of home life, as you are doing, too. . . . We are here leading a family life, and having hunting of all kinds, and pass the time most happily. Please believe, Sir, that if I can be of use to you here, or anywhere, I will go to work as gladly as for any man alive, I beg you to understand this. . . . And will you be so good as to have some sakers [falcons] sent to me, and if the price is the same as usual please tell the people that sell them to bring me a couple of cages full, after your falconers have examined them."

Of course, both Duke and Constable were closely watching events.

As we look back, the conflict seems inevitable. The reformers, convinced that they held God's truth in texts of the Bible, followed where Truth called, not speculating whether the Truth which summons to arms may be compact of prejudice, arrogance, superstition and love of power; while the Catholics were convinced that men who flouted loyalty and obedience, who were ready to rend Christendom asunder and split the Kingdom in two, were rebels, heretics, villains. It was a disagreement that could be decided only

by force. The curtain rang up for the first scene of the tragedy at the little town of Vassy, in Champagne, not a dozen miles from Joinville. The clash differed from dozens of others only in its dramatic tensity and in that the Duc de Guise, the leading champion of the Catholics, was held by the Huguenots to have cast down his glove there.

The trouble came about in this way. The Duc de Guise and the Cardinal of Lorraine had been looking ahead, and they saw the conflict coming; they knew that Philip of Spain was on their side, that Elizabeth of England was supporting the Huguenots, and that the Protestant leaders, Condé, Calvin, Bèze, would try to induce the German Lutherans to help them. Now the Lutherans believed in transubstantiation very much as the Catholics did, whereas the Huguenots, being Calvinists, did not. By harping on this point the Guises hoped to keep the Lutherans from joining the Huguenots. The Cardinal of Lorraine laid great stress upon this in negotiations with the Germans, and seems to have gone pretty far in his expressions of agreement with the Lutheran position; at any rate, after the affair at Vassy the Lutheran Duke of Würtemberg, a little sore to think, rightly or wrongly, that he had been regarded as an easy gull, exclaimed, "May God be the avenger of guile and perjury!" Be that as it may, the brothers returned from Germany to Joinville. Here the Duke received a summons from the Queen Mother to go to Court, which at that time was near Meaux. The Duke, taking his young son Henri de Guise, a boy of twelve, another son, aged seven, and his sweet wife, great with child, as well as his brother the Cardinal, and accompanied by a troop of some two hundred armed men, set forth from Joinville the last day of February, 1562, and stopped for the night at Dammartin-le-Franc. On Sunday, March first, he went on to Vassy.

Now Vassy was infested with Huguenots; and many disputes and arguments had arisen between the two factions there. Vassy lay in the country of the Guises, and, though the town belonged to

the royal domain, the revenues went to Mary Queen of Scots and were administered by the Duke; and the Guises, not without excuse, regarded the spiritual welfare of the town as their business. The old Duchess Antoinette had its orthodoxy very much at heart, and had been shocked to have conventicles of sectaries meet so near the Château de Joinville. She kept complaining to the Duke, begging him to deliver her from such a neighborhood; she reproached him for his patience with them, she said it was far too great, and did much hurt to his reputation, and that it would offend God. The Protestants, on their part, called her "the mother of tyrants and enemies to the Gospel." Altogether, the feeling in Vassy was tense. The Duke went there in order to pick up threescore men at arms, in garrison there. He was solicitous that there should be no tumult, so he dined in a little village before he got there. When he and his troops entered the town, he got off his horse in front of the Catholic church where service had already begun. Near by, in spite of the fact that the January Edict did not allow them to assemble within the walls of a town, the Protestants had hired a grange, where they met for worship according to their ritual. The accounts of what happened are very conflicting. Michel de Castelnau, a Catholic but a very fair-minded man, says this (*Mémoires de Michel de Castelnau, Livre III, Chapitre VII*):

"On the first day of March, which fell on a Sunday, the Duke went to dine at Vassy [this is a mistake, he had dined before he went] where his officers, who had ridden on ahead, found the Protestants holding their services in a grange near the church [It is important to remember that the grange was inside the walls]. There may have been six or seven hundred persons there of all ages. Then, *as the Duc de Guise has often told me*, some of his officers, and others who had gone ahead, curious to see such a meeting and the new form of worship, and with no other purpose, went up to the door of the grange, and then an altercation arose with rude words on both sides. Some of those within who were on guard at

the door threw stones and shouted insults at the Duc de Guise's men, calling them Papists and idolaters. At the noise of this altercation some pages ran up, and several gentlemen as well as others of the Duke's suite, and both sides got angry over the stones and insults. A great number of those within rushed out and pushed back the Duke's men. Word of this was brought to the Duke as he was about to sit down to table [another mistake], and it was said that they were killing his men. He went there in great haste. He found them fighting with sticks and fists, and as he got near the grange several stones were thrown at him, which he warded off with his cloak. And then as he advanced closer, both to protect himself from the stones and to quell the disorder, things got worse, and, as the Duke said, to his great regret some who were there to assist at the services were killed or wounded, as to which everybody had a different story."

Of course a great nobleman describing a riot of this kind makes it appear less serious than it was. Other accounts give more details. According to them, the Duke sent a young gentleman of his suite, M. de la Brosse, to the grange, accompanied by two German pages, one of whom carried the Duke's hunting gun and the other his pistols. Young La Brosse was to tell the minister that the Duke desired to speak with him. At the same time the Duke, with a score or two of his men, made ready to follow. La Brosse went to the door of the grange, but somebody within slammed it in his face; this irritated him and he kicked the door. He, and one of the pages, were let, or taken, in. The other page ran back to La Brosse senior, and cried that his son was being massacred. La Brosse senior and other gentlemen flew to the rescue, and rushed towards the Huguenots, who answered with volleys of stones. It seems that there was a sort of scaffolding and upon it a pile of stones, apparently on purpose to be used as missiles. At any rate, many stones lay ready to hand. A few of the Huguenots were armed. [To attend service with weapons was forbidden by the

Edict.] Shots were fired. Three of the congregation, apparently attempting to come out, were killed or wounded. La Brosse senior was severely wounded in the head, and the Duke himself as he came up was cut in the face by a stone, and blood drawn; at this the gentlemen with him were furious and ran amuck. The minister had at first attempted to go ahead with the service, but a harquebus was aimed at him; he pulled off his black robe and sought to slip out unnoticed, but tripped over a body, received a sword stroke, was made prisoner and taken away, guarded against an angry mob of women, who cried out, "Kill, kill, kill that wicked man!" It seems that the populace joined the Duke's soldiers in attacking the Huguenots. Altogether there was a hideous tumult, shrieks, shouts, blows, wounds, vain attempts to escape, and passion and hatred and vengeance. The Duke shouted out with all his might for them to stop, but the blood lust ranged among his men, and they did not heed. The Duchess of Guise was being carried in her litter near the walls of the town, and heard the fearful clamor, the shots and cries, and sent a messenger to her husband to end it; but he was already trying in vain to do so. Some fifty-odd of the Huguenots, three of them women, were killed, and many wounded. One man of the Duke's suite was killed and only a few wounded.

The Protestants all over France shrieked that it was a massacre, that the Duke had done it of malice prepense, and demanded vengeance; they called him the Butcher of Vassy, and issued all sorts of distorted stories. The Catholics, on the contrary—not perhaps without a touch of irony, for the Protestants made a fetish of the Bible—compared him to Moses, and quoted the episode of heresy concerning the Golden Calf: "Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. And he said unto them, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man

his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor. And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men." (Exod. 32: 26, 27.) Such, the Catholics pointed out, was the punishment of heretical action in the brave days of old.

The accusations against the Duke were submitted to the Parlement de Paris, and it completely acquitted him. It said, "We have not found, and do not find, any charge against him sustained; and no prosecution on account of the misadventure occurring at Vassy shall be had against him; all the fault lies with those who are alleged to have been maltreated, maimed, or killed, and they are far from any right to reparation. . . . On the contrary, what the Duc de Guise did was done in a righteous cause, according to the statutes, the law of nature and the *jus gentium*." There seem to have been three grounds on which the court could have based its judgment: One, that the assemblage for worship, being within a town, was unlawful; two, that some of the congregation carried weapons; three, that the Huguenots began the fray. At any rate the general Catholic opinion was that the Huguenots had violated the law and got what they deserved. But the significance of the episode was plain: the quarrel between the two religions could be settled only by civil war.

The Protestants took up arms at once and chose the Prince de Condé for their chief. The Duc de Guise, the Constable and the Maréchal de Saint-André put their heads together. The King of Navarre threw his lot in with them, and declared that "Whoever touched the fingertips of his brother, the Duc de Guise, touched him at the very center of his heart." The Queen Mother, however, alarmed more than ever by the Duke's popularity, bade him not go to Paris but to come to the Court, which was then at Monceaux. The Duke disobeyed; accompanied by two thousand horse, he entered Paris by the gate of Saint-Denis, amid the vociferous cheers of the people. The city elders came to meet him, and the *Prévôt des Marchands* (equivalent to Mayor) hailed him as Defender of the Faith. Catherine became more and more frightened; the Trium-

virate, strengthened by the accession of the first Prince of the Blood, might seize the reins of government and deprive her of the regency. She turned to the Protestants and wrote to the Prince de Condé, now the acknowledged head of the Huguenot party, a letter conjuring him to save her, her children and the Kingdom, and said she hoped with his aid to remedy all her troubles—prudently adding, “Burn this instantly.” She also sent word to Admiral Coligny to seize Orléans, Rouen and other cities.

If Condé had acted at once, if he had taken her and the King under his protection, he might have secured the government, but he did not. The Catholic chiefs, more astute, perceived how near they had come to being checkmated, and took advantage of his failure; they went out to Fontainebleau and politely asked Catherine to come to Paris with them. She did not care to go. The Triumvirs indicated to Antoine de Bourbon that he was the proper spokesman, but he shilly-shallied, and the Duke took the matter in hand. He said to Catherine: “Madam, we know the respect due to you, and we will not forego it as long as we live; but our duty obliges us to answer to the State for the King’s safety. You are at liberty to stay here as long as you wish, but our loyalty to the King compels us to take him today to a place where he shall have nothing to fear from his rebel subjects.” The Queen attempted to gain time by enlisting the sympathies of the vain and vacillating Antoine. But the Duke stiffened Antoine’s backbone; he said to him, “You know the Queen and her artful ways. She is seeking to gain time. A project like ours needs speed. The Prince de Condé has the same design as we, his army is increasing every minute, he is too capable a man not to attack us as soon as he is strong enough. And then, in possession of the King’s person, he will make us the laughingstock of Europe for allowing ourselves to be won over by the theatrical tears of an ambitious woman.” Antoine acquiesced, and the Queen Mother realized that she was in the power of a resolute man and that go she must. She wept tears of rage, but the Duke remarked, “A benefit that comes from love or force does not cease to be a benefit.”

## CHAPTER XVIII

### CIVIL WAR

THE Huguenots affected to be outraged by this imprisonment, as they called it, of the King. The Prince de Condé issued a manifesto to say that he was taking up arms to release the King and his mother, and to enforce the Edict of January, which the Duc de Guise (he said) had trampled under foot. The Huguenot bands gathered together, and separate troops captured Orléans, Angers, Tours, Blois, Valence and Lyons. The Catholics struck back. Everywhere there was massacre and iconoclasm. The Catholics, being more numerous, succeeded in hanging, drowning, hewing and hacking, more people than the Huguenots, but the Huguenots outdid them in sacking churches and breaking statues, images, vessels—symbols of belief dearer to the Catholics than life.

I will quote some details from the historian De Thou (1553-1617). The Prince de Condé captured Beaugency, a little town on the Loire, midway between Orléans and Blois, to which errant tourists motor in order to see the long-arched bridge across the river, and a Renaissance *hôtel de ville*—a town, as the guidebook puts it, “with a chequered history.” De Thou briefly says: “After two breaches made in the wall, the Provençal troops, followed by the Gascons [the South was the main breeding-place of Huguenots] and by the regiment of Jean d’Hangest, lord of Ivry, took the city by assault, put almost all its garrison to death, and sacked it, without even sparing what Protestants were in the city.” The Catholics took Blois; the soldiers pillaged all the houses, killed or drowned all the Protestants, without sparing women, some of whom were violated, others massacred—among others a lady of

good family, who, having been rescued from drowning, could not escape the fury of the murderers. The same sort of thing happened in dozens of cities all over France. One consequence was that, as in the time of The Hundred Years' War, all the rascals, rogues, ne'er-do-wells, idlers and criminals procured arms, banded together, and, whenever town or village had no means of defense, robbed and destroyed to their hearts' content. Ascribing all this to the Huguenots, the Parlement de Paris issued a decree outlawing them, and commanding all Catholics to take arms, sound the tocsin, chase them, and kill with impunity, and other similar Christian procedure; and the priests were ordered to read this decree every Sunday from the pulpit.

De Thou then goes on: "The obedient peasants took advantage of this to abandon, with pleasure, tillage of the ground for the more amusing occupations of robbery, pillage, lust and massacre. They chose from among their number leaders who had the most greed, effrontery, ferocity and inclination to carnage, and then, separating into bands, each under its leader, roamed about ready to commit all sorts of crimes." One of these bands went to the little town of Ligueil on the Indre in Touraine (the garden of France), where they strangled some of the inhabitants, put out the pastor's eyes and burned him over a slow fire. Another band went in the direction of Loches, and practiced all species of cruelty, not only against people whose orthodoxy was suspected but also against people wholly above reproach. There was like disorder in the country round Vendôme. The Protestants had broken the sacred images in the churches, and even violated the tomb of the Counts and Dukes of Vendôme, and the populace was so angry that it treated them like mad dogs. The law-abiding people asked for soldiers from Le Mans to protect them. De Thou then says: "The gentry, concerned about these evils, took arms to stop them, and chose Pierre Ronsard to command them. This sublime genius, delighted by the attractions, advantages and charms of this country [Touraine] had accepted the Curacy of Évailles. He was not one

of those ecclesiastics who regard the priesthood and pastoral functions as an engagement to a serious life, or as a check upon the liberty and license which poets permit themselves. Bred at court among the pages of Charles, Duke of Orléans, son of François I, he practiced the profession of arms, and had served in England and Scotland, before he devoted himself to the study of literature under Jean Dorat, and made use of the rare talent he possessed for poetry. As the pleasures and amusements of the simple life, which he had been leading for some time, had not caused him to lose his old tastes, this occasion that thus presented itself woke up the taste he had for fighting. So Ronsard, unable longer to put up with the insolence of those people who went about with impunity sacking churches, formed a troop of young gentlemen, put himself at their head and chastised severely a great number of these brigands. But when he learned that a body of troops was on its way from Le Mans, he went back to his presbytery....

“At Saint-Calais, some twenty miles to the northwest from Vendôme, the monks of the abbey there did not, for reasons unknown to me, like having soldiers quartered in the town to keep the peace. They rang their bells and, at the head of a body of sympathizers, killed some thirty soldiers that were in the abbey, and then went to the house of M. Constandier, who was there in peace and quiet, strangled him, & then killed his wife and threw her body into a well. The lord of the town, Joachim le Vasseur de Coigner, the most important of the local gentry, in great indignation at this, came with a company of soldiers and took a terrible vengeance on the monks and priests who had sought refuge in the abbey. He killed most of them, hanged the two ringleaders in the church, from which they had given the signal, and then had the bells rung for Vespers.”

One could give a list of dozens and dozens of French cities that were sacked by brutal violence—Bourgeuil, Le Mans, Abbeville, Senlis, Valogne, Poitiers, Corbigny, Gien, Aurillac, Mâcon, and so on. The Cardinal de Lorraine summed up the situation when

addressing the Council of Trent: "The Hand of God has stricken us, fathers and brothers. . . . All rights, all laws, are silent; every man according to his private and particular hatred takes vengeance on his enemy; the people are stirred to revolt, they have shaken and thrown off (as they say) the yoke of monarchy, and publicly set up anarchy." The wisdom of the ancient Romans in their hospitality to alien gods and their well-bred indifference to dogmas becomes clearer than ever.

Both sides felt it was time to strike a decisive blow. Antoine de Bourbon, as Lieutenant-General of the Kingdom, was commander-in-chief of the Catholic army, while his brother, the Prince de Condé, as Prince of the Blood, assumed the command of the Huguenots. The Catholic army was the more numerous, but that of the Huguenots was superior in quality; it is said that four thousand gentlemen of the most ancient houses in France had joined them. Of these nobles by far the most important was Admiral Coligny. For a long time Coligny had been uncertain where his duty lay. He stood, like Robert E. Lee, between two loyalties: he hated the thought of civil war, Frenchmen against Frenchmen, and he doubted if the Huguenots could resist the power of the Triumvirate. Then dreadful stories of massacres came flying in, and he heard that the Prince de Condé had raised the standard of revolt. One night, after he had gone to bed and been asleep for two hours, he was wakened by his wife's sobs and sighs. He turned to her and asked what was the matter. She wept and said, "The bodies of our brethren lie naked in dungeons, or scattered in the fields, a prey to dogs and ravens; their blood and your wife cry aloud to God." She besought him to call his gentlemen to arms, join Condé and fight for the faith. He tried to make her see the likelihood of defeat and its consequences. "Think," he said, "is your heart stout enough to bear complete overthrow, to endure treason among our friends, flight, exile in a foreign land, hunger for yourself, and, what is worse, for your children, and death by the executioner, after you have seen your husband

dragged through the streets and exposed to ignominy?" She wept and persisted. He asked for three weeks to think it over. "Three weeks!" she cried. "Don't lay upon your soul the deaths of those three weeks. I demand of you, in God's name, not to be false to us now." He got up. His wife and her ladies saddled the horses while the gentlemen buckled on their armor, then they helped him mount, and off he rode to join Condé. His brother d'Andelot, La Rochefoucauld and other great noblemen served under him.

Of these two Huguenot chiefs, Condé and Coligny, the Papal nuncio has left a description:

"Their talents and tastes are different. The Admiral is better in council, the Prince in action. The strength of the latter lies in his impetuosity, that of the former in his steadfastness. The one is shrewd, the other is still shrewder. The Prince has a more pleasing character; the Admiral is the more austere. The Prince, too, loves racing, jumping, hunting, exhibitions of wrestling, public shows, every kind of armed contest, horses, sports, jests, girls dancing, women singing. But with the Admiral there always seems to be seriousness of thought and conduct. Then, again, the Prince is a most graceful speaker, whereas the Admiral's eloquence is of a graver kind, perhaps because he has become familiar with the Latin tongue, and devotes himself earnestly to theological pursuits. The latter, also, is much interested in State affairs, and swift to punish wrongdoing, the former being more easygoing. The Admiral advises as to what should be done; but the Prince does it. Then, too, the Admiral gives audience to ambassadors, busies himself with supplies and finance, decides points of law, fortifies positions, draws up the line of battle, pitches camp, reviews the army, chooses the place and time of battle, and superintends religious affairs. The Prince, on the other hand, asks for danger and fight; he is small and of elegant figure. The Admiral uses a toothpick, and carries it in his mouth, day and night. Yet both, by their graciousness and generosity, are a power with all." (Quoted by A. W. Whitehead).



*Antoine de Bourbon, Prince de Henry.*

(Photograph by Giraudon)

Antoine de Bourbon



And Brantôme rounds out this description of the Prince by noting an aspect that appealed to him:

*“Ce petit homme tant jolly  
Tousjours cause et tousjours ry,  
Tousjours baise sa mignonne.  
Dieu garde de mal le petit homme.*

This pleasant dainty little man  
Chats and laughs whenever he can,  
And round a sweetheart puts his arm;  
God keep this little man from harm!

Brantôme also says, “He is little, but vigorous, strong and adroit as any man in France, on foot or on horseback, more ambitious than pious, and as much attached as another to the pleasures of this world, and as much in love with other men’s wives as with his own, for he has the Bourbon disposition, which is of a very amorous complexion.”

The Huguenots made Orléans their headquarters, and the Triumvirs proposed to isolate the city by capturing the rebellious towns roundabout, Blois, Bourges and others, and then lay siege to it; but when they learned that Condé had made a treaty with Queen Elizabeth by which she was to give him 600,000 crowns and 6,000 soldiers, upon his agreement to surrender Havre, for her to hold until she should receive Calais in exchange, they changed their minds and decided to capture Rouen before the English soldiers could arrive, and at once began the siege (Sept. 28, 1562).

They carried by assault a fort on the Côte Sainte-Catherine, alongside the river, to the southeast of the town, and then they were able to dig their trenches close to the city walls. The Duke and Antoine de Bourbon were frequently in the trenches, and Queen Catherine herself came within easy reach of cannon and harquebus; she said there was no more reason for her to avoid danger than for them. Antoine exposed himself once too often, and was badly wounded. Dr. Paré examined the wound, but he could give no hope. The Constable took over the command, and

on October 26th, after the city had rejected a final offer of life, liberty of conscience and a general amnesty, all was ready for the assault. The Duc de Guise wished to spare the townsfolk. He proclaimed to the soldiers, "That victory over oneself is greater than any that can be won from an enemy, that it would be unworthy of disciplined soldiers to sack a city of France, especially against the will of the King," and he promised extra pay to officers and soldiers. The assault sounded, the ramparts were carried, the Catholics pursued the flying defenders and paid no more heed to the Duke's words than to the prayers of their victims. The one great rule they respected was "to the victors belong the spoils." The sack lasted three days. The wounded King of Navarre was carried in a litter through the breach into the city, but it was his last triumph; he died some two weeks later, having relapsed, it is believed, into Protestantism once more.

The Duke of Guise won great honor in this siege. He deserved, as usual, the praise of taking infinite pains beforehand; he played the parts of chief of artillery, commissary, colonel, captain, private, and displayed his universal military accomplishments. When he wished a place reconnoitered he never said, to captain, sergeant or private, "Go there, reconnoiter that place for me." Or, if he did, and was not satisfied with their reports, he went afterwards to see; but most of the time he went himself. He personally stationed officers and privates where he wished them, in the trenches, in the ditches, on the ramparts, or at the breach, or elsewhere, as it might be. Brantôme, who was there, says:

"I saw him one day, at the siege of Rouen, give an order to M. de Bellegarde, who was afterwards a Marshal of France. The Duke thought him a Huguenot, and had heard that in Piedmont he had been a blustering, hectoring fellow, so, to prove him on these two points, he ordered him to reconnoiter a recess or bay, in the keep, in order to ascertain whether there was not a hidden bastion there. He noticed Bellegarde looking for a casque and shield, so he lent

him his. M. de Bellegarde undoubtedly went on the errand, and was in danger, for on returning there were two bullets in the shield that he had hung over his back. He made his report to M. de Guise, who was not as well satisfied as he wished to be; the report was not sufficiently exact. So he said, 'Give me my shield; I am not wholly pleased with what you have told me.' He put on casque and shield, and went calmly, although the harquebuses were hard at work, without the slightest sign of apprehension or haste. He looked and inspected at his ease, without curtailing his visit, as some captains do, satisfying themselves, in view of the dangers, with a half-done or very imperfect job. Then he returned slowly to the trenches, where there were more than a thousand of us watching him. He took off his armor and said that he was better satisfied than he had been, and had definitely learned something as to which he had been in doubt. . . . The assault on the city was made soon afterwards, and after he had given the necessary orders he went with the column and took his part in the fight; in consequence, his captains, soldiers and gentlemen (for instance M. Andouin, a valiant nobleman, and the brave young lord Castelpers, who were killed near him), and many others, seeing their general so courageous, and hearing him urge them on with brave words, fought in rivalry, carried the place with a rush, and followed up their victory furiously. The Duke (always at their head), after he had forced the breach and stood on the wall, recommended three things: the honor of the women, the lives of good Catholics who had been detained there by force, and no mercy to the English, ancient enemies of France. That is how this valiant general showed his men how to fight well, how to rush into danger, and not spare skin or life, more than he himself did."

During the siege, according to Oudin, a contemporary, a young gentleman of Le Mans, who had sneaked into the royal camp in order to assassinate the Duke of Guise, was caught. The Duke asked him if he had done him any wrong. The young man said,

“No.” “Why then,” the Duke asked, “did you try to take my life?” “Just the zeal that I have for my religion,” the fellow answered, “for I believe that your death would be of great advantage to it.” “If your religion,” the Duke answered, “teaches you to assassinate those that have never done you a wrong, mine teaches me to forgive my enemies. Go in peace and learn a better lesson.”

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE BATTLE OF DREUX

AFTER the siege of Rouen both sides received reinforcements. D'Andelot, with English money, hired seven thousand German mercenaries, and, at or near Orléans, joined Condé, who thereupon marched on Paris, but in too dilatory a fashion; the Duc de Guise, with Spanish troops, had preceded him, and already garrisoned the city. Condé then led his army to the northwest to meet the English auxiliaries in Normandy; and the Catholic army, commanded by the Constable, taking a parallel route a little farther to the north, hurried to intercept him. The Huguenots were delayed by the load of booty they had taken, and the Constable, travelling faster, was able to cross the little river Eure, near Dreux, and take a position a few miles south of the town, between it and the enemy. A great plain, rising in a gradual curve from the city of Dreux, spreads out southwards into a wide plateau. Here the Constable drew up his army in battle array, on lines east and west. His right wing, consisting of French troops and two thousand Spanish auxiliaries, extended to the hamlet of Épernay; in the center he placed his main battalions, six thousand Swiss, and on his left French and Breton infantry, resting on the village of Blainville. He himself took his station, with artillery, between the center and left wing, while Saint-André led the right wing. The Duc de Guise had no regular command; he placed himself with his men-at-arms near the hamlet of Épernay, to the rear on the right, where the ground swells slightly, and from the top he could follow the course of the battle.

The plateau was an excellent place for the employment of cav-

alry and, as the Huguenots had five thousand horse to the Catholics' two, Condé decided to attack, although the Constable had some fourteen thousand foot to his eight. Coligny led the charge on the Huguenot right, while Condé charged the Swiss. Coligny routed the Constable's left wing, chased the fugitives from the field and captured the Constable. Condé, too, broke through the Swiss battalions, but did not scatter them; on the contrary, they rallied. "Their faces all blood and dust, their eyes flaming with fury, and loudly bellowing," they rushed to meet Condé's Lutheran lansquenets, and fought so lustily that it was only after the Protestant wings closed in round them that they were driven back, and even so they retreated in good order. At this retreat the Huguenot officers, all jubilant, congratulated their generals, but Coligny pointed towards Épernay and said, "That thundercloud will soon be upon us." The contingent under the Duc de Guise, on the extreme right, had not been engaged; the Duke had bided his time, holding back till opportunity beckoned. He then charged, horse and foot, upon the Huguenot army, scattered loose over the great plain. He swept all before him; Condé was wounded and made prisoner. Nevertheless, Coligny, who had rallied a thousand or more of his cavalry behind the village of Blainville, returned and attacked Guise's pikemen. In the mêlée Saint-André was captured, and murdered by a personal enemy. But Coligny could not long withstand the rallied Catholics, and withdrew, leaving the field to the victors (December 19, 1562).

The battle was not decisive, but it redounded to the glory and advantage of the Duc de Guise; of his two fellow Triumvirs, one was killed, the other captured, and he was left supreme, and, as De Thou says, it was he that decided the victory. Brantôme gives all the credit to the Duke—*Ce grand Duc de Guise*, whom Spaniards call *el gran ducque de Guysa*, and Italians *il gran capitano*—“for true it is that the battle was lost, but M. de Guise, who was always cool and steady, bided his time, and recovered all that had been lost, and turned defeat into a notable victory.” Some thought,

he says, that the Duke should have taken part in the battle sooner, and adds, "He did not do so because it was not the right time. By waiting for the very nick of opportunity he charged, at the crucial moment, full upon the fresh Huguenot forces, who had not been engaged, and on their infantry, and recalled to life what we had thought dead and buried. I remember (as I was there) how, after he had watched the game played to the end, the battle lost, the disorder and rout of our men, and the confused and straggling pursuit of the Huguenots, the Duke, at the head of his men, gazing in this direction and then in that, bade his people make way to let him go through them more easily; and, passing through several ranks, how he looked about at his ease, rising up in his stirrups, though he was tall (both big and well-made), so that he could see better. Having done so, and seeing that his opportunity was at hand, he turned round, then looked a little more, but only for a moment, and then all of a sudden cried out: 'Come, my friends, they are ours; the battle is won!'" His steadfast patience, holding back till it was time to strike, won great admiration from military men, even among the Huguenots themselves. Blaise de Montluc said that "if the Duke had lost the battle, it would have been all up with France, for both State and Religion would have been overthrown."

That night the Duke of Guise, left sole commander of the royal army, lodged in a peasant's hut in the village of Blainville. Here he received his illustrious prisoner, the Prince de Condé, with all the deference due to a Prince of the Blood. They dined at the same table. Early in the day the Huguenot mercenaries, having achieved a temporary victory, had pillaged the Duke's baggage, and there was but one bed to be found. The Duke offered it to the Prince, who hesitated; he was unwilling to take too great advantage of the Duke's courtesy, and on the other hand he did not wish to appear rude. So they shared one bed together.

At the time, however, the Duke was criticized because he had not gone to the rescue of the Constable in time to save him. The Duke,

therefore, wishing to make his case clear, when he saw the Queen and King at Rambouillet a month later, asked the Queen, ceremoniously, please, after her dinner, to "grant him an audience." His words were very formal and startled the Queen, who had reason enough to be uncertain as to what might happen at any minute. "Jesus! Cousin," she exclaimed, "what are you saying?" He explained that he wished to report to her publicly just what he had done, since she had given him command of her army, and to present to her the officers, both French and foreign, who had faithfully served her and the King. The Queen granted the audience, and the Duke rendered a full account of his doings. "He praised very highly the Constable, the Duke d'Aumale (his brother), the Maréchal de Saint-André, and M. de La Brosse, and many others dead or living. He praised the French soldiers, and also the Spanish, although they had not done as much as had been expected—but that, he said was not their fault, for they were not in the thick of the fight—but their martial appearance, always ranged in ranks according to traditional military discipline, had been of great service. Above all he praised the Swiss very highly for their long and obstinate resistance, for rallying again and again after they had been driven back with great loss and coming up again to the fight. He spoke so well of all, that those who had not been there cursed their luck, and they that had deemed themselves very fortunate to be so praised by their general.

"One thing he did that surprised everybody; he praised a great many officers and noblemen who, as all knew, *avoient gentiment fuy*, had very prettily run away. The Queen and others asked him his reason for praising those men. He said that it was one of the things that happened in war, which had possibly never come to them before and never would again, and that another time they would correct that fault and have courage to do better. However, he skimmed lightly over their praises, and laid great stress on those that had done well, which made it easy to tell where he flattered and where he told the truth. He talked for a long time, in the midst of complete silence, for he spoke so well that everyone was

carried away. He was eloquent, one of our best speakers [I am quoting Brantôme], not with artificial and florid eloquence, but simple and soldier-like, and with the grace of those qualities. The Queen Mother said afterwards that she had never heard him to greater advantage. Then the Duke presented his officers to her, and she, being then little more than forty, with her charm of manner, and her pleasant readiness, received them most graciously. She told the Duke that, though she had read his reports, she was much pleased to hear the story from his own lips, and that she and the King would always be indebted to him for the great obligation of his victory. She then thanked all the officers with extreme courtesy, and assured them that when she found opportunity—and she would seek it—she would show her gratitude. They all were well content with their Queen and their general. As for myself [Brantôme says] I never heard anyone speak better than the Duke did then; even M. le Cardinal, his eloquent brother, had he been there, would have been put to shame."

Montaigne, who was a grown man at the time of the battle, says: "There were all sorts of unusual happenings in the Battle of Dreux; and those who are not very friendly to the reputation of M. de Guise are very ready to assert that he had no excuse for having stood still and waited with the forces under his command while the enemy was overwhelming the Constable, the general-in-chief, with its artillery, and that it would have been better, in order to prevent so great a loss, to run a risk and take the enemy in the flank, than to wait for the advantage of attacking him from behind. But, aside from the testimony of the result, whoever discusses the matter impartially will readily admit, I think, that the end and aim, not of every captain but of every individual soldier, must look to final victory, and that incidental occurrences, of whatever importance they may be in themselves, must not divert them from that object." And he cites a precedent from Greek history. Montaigne is right; and no reasonable person, however prejudiced against the Duke as the champion of Catholicism, will fail to agree.

## CHAPTER XX

### DEATH OF FRANÇOIS DE GUISE

THE Battle of Dreux, by the capture of both the Constable and the Prince de Condé, and the death of Saint-André, had left the Duc de Guise and Admiral Coligny the indisputable heads of the two parties. Coligny went to Normandy in order to join his English allies, and the Duke, taking his army in the opposite direction, laid siege to Orléans, the chief city held by the Huguenots. On the south side of the river lies the faubourg le Portereau, which had been well fortified by walls, bastions and a moat, and was connected with the city on the north bank by a bridge. This bridge was also protected, close to the south shore, by a fort, Les Tourelles, famous in French history because a hundred and thirty-three years before Joan of Arc had captured it from the besieging English and saved the city. The Duke attacked this faubourg in the beginning of February, 1563. D'Andelot, Coligny's brother, the Huguenot general, had posted a detachment of troops there, Gascons to the west, German mercenaries to the east, with orders to hold the position at all costs until the movable property and military stores could be transported across the bridge into the city. But the Duke acted too promptly for them. The Gascons fought well, but the Germans abandoned their posts, and the assailants swarmed in. D'Andelot, ill though he was, sallied forth from the city with a band of Huguenot nobles. "Follow me, Gentlemen!" he cried. "We must drive back the enemy or die. This is the only passage by which they can attack us, and it is only wide enough for ten men abreast. With a hundred men we can hold off a thousand. Come on, Gallants!" He reached the fort of Les Tourelles

just in time, for the defenders, in terrible confusion, their ranks mixed, encumbered with baggage, were at the mercy of the assailants; some had been cut down, some drowned, some had perished in flames, and the bridge had a narrow escape from complete capture. The escape, however, was but very temporary, for in a few days the Royalists carried it, and with the capture of the fort the Duke felt confident of the speedy fall of the city. On February 18 he wrote to the Queen that the siege would very soon have a happy issue, and that he would not delay to send her news of it.

Indeed there was every reason to believe that the Catholics would now be able to crush the rebellious Huguenots. The Duc de Guise was vastly superior in military abilities to the Constable, and after the capture of Orléans it would not have been difficult for him to have overcome every Huguenot force in the field. He was the great, the supreme danger, to the Huguenot cause, as the Huguenots were well aware, and he was accordingly hated by them, very much as General Sherman was hated by the Southerners after his march to the sea. So extreme was their hate, they committed it so thoroughly to tradition and legend, that even today this *preux chevalier*, this brave, generous, magnanimous gentleman, loyal to the King and his church, is depicted by historians of Huguenot sympathies as a cruel, unscrupulous, avaricious, time-serving adventurer. Clio, certainly, has her wayward moods. Every Huguenot child was taught that he was the great enemy of their cause. Naturally, several attempts had been made to assassinate him, and his death was worth twenty thousand men.

During the siege, the Duke encamped his army at Olivet, two and a half miles south of the river, and made his headquarters at Valsins, a hamlet a short distance south of the little river Loiret, while he himself slept at the Châtelet, a mansion hard by. His wife and his eldest son, Henri, the young Prince de Joinville, had lately come to join him, for he wished to give his son his first lessons in war. Every day the Duke rode out to the trenches and returned at night. On Thursday, February 18, he came back later

than usual, for he had been expecting envoys from the Queen concerning negotiations with the Huguenots. They had not come, so he started back for Vaslins, by way of Saint-Mesmin; but as the bridge there had been destroyed by the enemy he sent his staff round by the bridge at Olivet, and he himself rode to the ferry which for the nonce took the place of the broken bridge. The ferryboat was small, and would hold only two or three horses and four men. Brantôme recounts this anecdote concerning the broken bridge (told him by M. de Serre, chief of the commissariat), how M. de Serre had urged the Duke to have the bridge rebuilt, so that it would be pleasanter for him and also save his staff from the necessity of taking the roundabout way by the bridge at Olivet. M. de Guise replied: "Let us save the King's money. He has much to do elsewhere; he has great need of every penny, for everybody robs him on every side. We can get on very well without the bridge; this little ferryboat is enough for me." If the bridge had been rebuilt the Duke's staff would have accompanied him, and his life would have been saved.

The Duke had with him this afternoon only four persons: M. de Rostaing (the Queen's chamberlain), Rostaing's valet, his own maître d'hôtel and a young huntsman. A trumpeter accompanying them had ridden on ahead to warn the ferryman of the Duke's approach; the other five, following, crossed the ferry. Then the maître d'hôtel galloped ahead, in order to reach the Châtelet as soon as possible and spare the Duchess any anxiety she might feel because the Duke was late, and to let her know that she might order supper set on the table. The road was steep, and the Duke rode slowly; he had taken off his cuirasse for comfort and wore only doublet and cloak, and was talking to M. de Rostaing, who was riding by his side, about the possibilities of peace. The young huntsman was just ahead. Meantime, however, the maître d'hôtel had noticed a man walking to and fro in the neighborhood of the broken bridge, leading his horse by the bridle, who asked him when the Duke would be coming; but naturally the maître d'hôtel



*(Archives Photographiques d'Art et d'Histoire, Paris)*

François de Guise



had had no suspicion of him. The little cavalcade reached the point where the road to the Châtelet crossed that by which they had come; there were tall walnut trees there, and, near by, the walls of a ruined house. A man rode by them, who took off his hat to the Duke, and passed on. The Duke turned to acknowledge the salutation when suddenly a shot rang out, and a man on horseback a few paces distant was seen turning his bridle as if to fly. The Duke cried, "I am killed!" and fell forward on his horse's neck. M. de Rostaing drew his sword and dashed at the murderer, but the latter struck at him such a stroke that his head, had he not bent it aside, would have been split, and rode off, easily outstripping M. de Rostaing's mule.

The Châtelet was scarce a mile away, and the Duke was held upon his horse by his companions. Brantôme was there; he says: "I remember that when M. de Guise received the wound from which he died, the Duchess was at the camp, for she had come a few days before to visit him. As he entered the house, so wounded, she ran to the door in despair, weeping, and, greeting him, cried out, 'Is it possible that the wretch who did the deed, and he that ordered it (for she suspected the Admiral) shall remain unpunished! O God, if you are just, as you ought to be, take vengeance, otherwise—' Before she finished, her husband in rebuke said, 'My love, do not offend God by your words. If it be He that has sent me this for my sins, His will be done, and praised be He. If the deed comes from elsewhere, vengeance is reserved to Him, and He will take it without you.'" Then he kissed her and his son, Henri, the young Prince de Joinville, and was carried into his bedroom, where surgeons examined his wound. That evening a number of officers came in, and he begged them to finish the dispatches he had begun, and attend to sundry military matters, so that the King's business might not be retarded by his wound. Among his letters that came that day, three warned him to be on his guard.

There was a search for the assassin, and he was captured on

the second day, Saturday. That same day the Queen, who had been notified, came and paid a visit to the Duke. The wounded man seemed greatly comforted by the honor done him, gave her an account of his actions and plans, and appeared better. The next day she had the assassin, whose name was Poltrot de Méré, brought before her Council and examined. He made a full and complete confession, answered all questions asked him, and ended by asserting that Admiral Coligny, M. de Soubise, M. de La Rochefoucauld and many others had instigated the crime.

The Duke, in spite of excruciating remedies applied by the surgeons, grew worse. Lancelot de Carle, Bishop of Riez, gave a full account of his last days in a letter to the King, and, though couched in rhetorical language, there is every reason to believe it to be substantially accurate. And there is another narrative of the Duke's interview with Catherine de Médicis, on Tuesday, the day before his death, written by someone on the spot, which I quote from M. de Vaissière.

"He made in the presence of the Queen and a great many gentlemen a long discourse on the reasons that had moved him to enter upon this war. He said it had never been his intention to do aught but to preserve the Kingdom in peace and unity, under the young King, but for the love he bore the King and the welfare of the Kingdom he could not bear the wrongs done to His Majesty, the taking possession of his fortresses, and other acts of rebellion and sedition, as he had often asserted in many a statement; that it was well known that he had not undertaken the war of his own accord—on the contrary, last year when he was in Lorraine, where he had gone with the idea of making a long stay, he was summoned and solicited by the King of Navarre, the King's Lieutenant-General, to come into France and assemble the troops that he did assemble, and from that time the Queen and the King point by point had ordered him to do what he had done, and without their command he had undertaken nothing. As for himself, he

protested that he entertained no angry feelings against the Huguenots, nor any personal enmity against M. le Prince de Condé, nor against the Sieur de Châtillon, who had instigated, so it was said, the doing of what had been done. He had acted under the command of the King and Queen, and out of the zeal that he felt for the welfare and peace of the realm, which he saw greatly menaced by ruin if a remedy were not promptly applied; and whether the remedy applied had obviated a greater evil, was a question that he submitted to the judgment of every man of common sense and a loyal subject of the King.

“He had not paid attention to any man’s religion, because everyone is master of his own conscience, but when he saw that this new religion brought with it sedition and rebellion, that it evidently wanted to change the government and the laws, he could not bear to have that happen. But he did not blame the Prince de Condé, to whom he had always been a friend, a loyal and faithful cousin, for these things; and the Queen knew in what terms he had spoken of the Prince, whom he held in as high regard as any prince in the world. But it was well known that the Prince was led, and that the Sieurs de Châtillon had contrived this way to kill him; however, he had never wished them ill until they had rebelled against the King. For this he called God to witness, and for love of God (since He commanded that one should forgive one’s enemies) he forgave them the long-standing hatred that they had borne him, and the wrong they had done him in having him killed, and he not only forgave them, but loved them and thanked them because, by their means, he was taken away from the miseries of this world, from its sorrows and pains; he was content to die, and felt confident that he would find salvation, not by his own deeds but by the grace and mercy of God, who knew his heart and its purposes, and he prayed God to pardon his innumerable faults.

“Then, though the King was not present, he spoke as if he were, and addressed his words to him: begging him to deal kindly with his subjects, to live in the religion of his ancestors, to recognize

his servants, and watch over his people as a good father looks after his children and a good shepherd looks after his sheep, and to adhere to the virtue he had learned in youth, and to do all that becomes a king, in worthiness of the hopes conceived of him and of the lineage of the very Christian Kings of France.

“Afterwards the Duke spoke to the Queen, who was present, and besought her to continue to educate her son, the King, as she had been doing, in all the virtues worthy of a prince who would one day have so many subjects to rule; and to give to his Kingdom what it needed—peace—without which he foresaw France broken asunder and in ruins, and to reform the vices of all classes, for those vices were the causes of the troubles and calamities that press upon us.

“And finally he commended his wife and children to the King and Queen, recalled his services and begged the Queen to pardon the man who had killed him.”

This long interview with the Queen tired him and aggravated his fever. His brother, the Cardinal de Lorraine, counselled him to take the last rites of the Church. The Duke thanked him, and then stated his beliefs and hopes so piously that the Bishop of Riez says that neither he nor the other clergy had anything to add or to suggest. He then confessed, received absolution, heard mass, and then asked his wife and son to come close to hear his last admonitions. To his wife he said: “My dearly loved companion, you know that I have always loved and esteemed you as much as a woman can be, as I have always tried to make you see, and you have done the same to me, and our love has never waned in all our married life, each doing for the other all we could. I will not deny that the frailty and heedlessness of youth sometimes led me to things that might offend you; I beg you to excuse and forgive me. In this regard I am not the worst of sinners, nor among the least. For the last three years, or more, you know with what deep respect I have lived with you, not giving you a single occasion to feel the slightest discontent with me. . . .

"I leave the children God has given us to your care, and I beg you, by the inviolable love between us two, to be a good mother always and fulfill the serious duties you owe them, teaching them in all things to love and fear God, to obey His commandments and follow the ways of righteousness. Keep them loyal servants to the King and my kind lady, the Queen....

"Procure good tutors for them, who will ground them in good literature—I mean in books beyond all reprobation—and wise masters who will set them in the path of honorable men . . . and chiefly my son here, the eldest, who should be a guide and example to the other."

Then, turning to the young Prince, he said, "My son, you have heard how I have said to your mother that God has put you in my place.... Therefore, my darling boy, keep the fear and love of God before your eyes and in your heart, walk in the straight and narrow path, abandoning the broad road to destruction.... Never let yourself be drawn into vicious company. . . . Never seek advancement by bad means . . . wait for the honors that shall come from the generosity of your King to reward your services and hard work. Do not wish for great offices, for they are too difficult to manage, but in those to which God appoints you, put all your might, all your being, in order to perform your whole duty, to the honor of God and the satisfaction of your King.... And now, dear son, I commend your mother to your care. Honor her and obey her as God and nature ordain. . . . Love your brothers as if they were your children. . . . Keep united with them, for that is God's will and the knot of your strength. And I pray God to bestow His blessing upon you, as I do mine."

Then he bade his brothers good-bye, and thanked them, and begged those about him to remind the Queen of his long and faithful service to the Crown, "You see," he said, "the state I am in by the act of a man who did not appreciate what he was doing, and I beg you to make a humble petition to the Queen to pardon him for the honor of God and love of me. If it is thought that he has

committed an offense against the State, as to that I say nothing; but as far as concerns me as a private citizen, please beg her affectionately on my behalf that no harm be done him. And you, whoever you are, who were the instigator of his act, to you I am deeply indebted. I should be very ungrateful if I did not thank you, since by your means I am close to the hour in which I hope to go to my God and enjoy His presence....

“But it is time for me to think over the wrongs I have done.... I have sometimes been constrained to use extreme severity, as, in Lombardy, putting men to death for slight offenses, for stealing a loaf of bread or some lard—a necessary severity in time of war, but always displeasing to God; and I am sorry for those and for similar offenses.... I have also counselled taking property belonging to the Church, but always for a worthy purpose, for the public good in time of need.

“I have always wanted a beneficial reformation in the Church, so that she might the better honor and serve God, and I hope this will happen in Christendom, when those that undertake it shall be seen wearing the badge of true and loyal servants of God.... and as to this last time when I took up arms, I call God to witness that I was not influenced by any private interest, nor ambition, nor revenge, but solely zeal for the honor of God and the true Faith....

“And I beseech you to believe that the sorry event at Vassy took place against my will, for I did not go there with any intention of doing them any harm. I was on the defensive, not an aggressor. But when those with me saw me wounded, they lost their tempers and drew their swords. I did all I could to stop them and prevent the people from receiving unnecessary outrages.

“I have deserved and striven in all possible ways for a satisfactory peace; the man who does not wish for it is neither a good man nor loyal to his King. Shame to him that does not wish it; I beg you to urge the Queen to make such a peace for the preservation of her greatly afflicted Kingdom; for if this wretched state of things continues, no child will inherit his father’s lands, nor any

proprietor retain his own. If God grant no remedy, it would be better to go away and till the ground elsewhere. I feel compassion for those that come after me. It is true that peace is not in man's power, on account of arrogant wills and hardened hearts; it can only come to this poor Kingdom by the goodness of God!" He died the next day, Ash Wednesday, February 24, 1563.

The Bishop of Riez in his narrative closes with these words: "And so this great man departed from us, leaving tears of sorrow in our eyes, and in our hearts the sweet, the infinite, comfort of the happy memory of his rare virtues and graces, so excellent that they will be celebrated in this world with praise everlasting."

The Catholics bewailed their loss: "It is the end of a Christian Prince," "It is the end of a Roland," "It is the last of a Saint Louis from whom he is descended." In the camp, flags were lowered, pikes trailed, trumpets sounded funeral notes, and sighs and lamentations were heard everywhere. On the other hand, the Protestants rejoiced. Poltrot was hailed as a new Brutus, a new Mutius Scaevola, the instrument of Divine Justice. In Orléans bells were rung and salvos of cannon fired. Coligny said, "We cannot deny the evident miracles of God," and an eminent English theologian, Bishop Jewel of Salisbury, wrote: "The death of the Guysian Pharaoh, which I have today heard of as an ascertained and undoubted fact, has affected, believe me, my inmost heart and soul. It was so sudden, so opportune, so fortunate, and so far exceeding all our hopes and expectations."

The historian De Thou, a boy of nine at the time, and well versed in the state of opinion of the period of which he is writing, says: "The Duke was, by the admission of his enemies, the greatest man of his time, worthy of all sorts of praises, from whatever side one looks at him. His consummate ability in war, joined to great good fortune, and his rare prudence in the management of affairs, would have made him regarded as born for the happiness and the adornment of France, if he had lived in less stormy times, and in a con-

juncture when the state was better governed. But the Kingdom was torn by faction, and this great man, as much distinguished by his virtue and his courage, as by his high birth, thought that he could lift himself higher than the condition of a private person, and, too docile to the counsels of Cardinal Charles de Lorraine, his brother, a man of ambitious and turbulent nature, although he sometimes neglected his advice, allowed himself to take, or to form, a party. Although, according to the laws of the Kingdom, he had no title that gave him the right to command armies, his rank, his dignities, his personal merit, and his brilliant qualities had won him so much reputation and authority that he was regarded as absolute master in matters of war, as well as in the Council."

## CHAPTER XXI

### POLTROT DE MÉRÉ

THE ASSASSIN was Jean Poltrot de Méré, a gentleman from the An-goumois, a province in the southwest of France, where there were many Huguenots. He had been bred as a page in the household of the Baron d'Aubeterre, but had passed much of his youth in Spain, and there had acquired the manner, the voice, the carriage, the look and the habits of the country to such a degree, besides being little and dark-skinned, that he was nicknamed *The little Spaniard*. When he returned to France he became an ardent Huguenot. M. d'Aubeterre, also a Huguenot, had himself been obliged to seek refuge in Geneva, where, in obedience to a law that every man should have a trade, noble or not, he became a button-maker. There Brantôme (to his satisfaction) saw him very poor and wretched; afterwards d'Aubeterre had taken part in the Conspiracy of Amboise and had been condemned to death, but the Duc de Guise, at the instance of the Maréchal de Saint-André, had procured his pardon. This favor of the Duke's, according to Brantôme, he repaid by instigating Poltrot to kill him. D'Aubeterre also recommended Poltrot to his Protestant brother-in-law, M. de Soubise, governor of Lyons. Soubise also, it is said, encouraged Poltrot to assassinate the Duke; at all events, after he had heard Poltrot boast that he was going to kill the Duke, he sent him with letters of recommendation to Coligny.

The Admiral had need of spies, and Poltrot had already proved useful in that capacity. The Admiral talked to him, apparently explained what he wanted of him as a spy, and gave him twenty

crowns. Poltrot then went to Orléans and succeeded in being presented to the Duke, to whom he said that he had discovered the abuses in the new religion and had quitted it, and he now wished to serve God and the King. "M. de Guise," Brantôme says, "always good, magnanimous and generous, received him very amiably, as was his wont, said he was right welcome, and bade the quartermaster take care of him, and often invited him to dine at his own table. Once I saw him come to dinner when we were half through; M. de Guise asked him if he had dined. He said, no, and the Duke bade a place be set for him." Poltrot seems to have learned what he could of the disposition of the army and of the Duke's plans, and to have gone back to Coligny, who was then on his way from Orléans to Normandy.

Then came the suspicious interview. Coligny heard whatever he had to say, and gave him a hundred crowns to buy a fast horse. Poltrot returned to the Catholic camp; and on the fatal day, after lying in wait by the broken bridge, did the deed. He rode away fast, easily outstripping M. de Rostaing's mule, but it was dark and he lost his way in the woods, and, instead of going far, went round and round in a circle, and came on the village of Olivet, where the Duke's Swiss mercenaries were stationed. "*Ho, wer da?*" he heard; so he turned back, and rode about till eight o'clock the next morning; then to rest his horse he sought refuge in a little hut, and there his pursuers stumbled upon him.

In the first interrogatories he accused the Admiral, as I have said. He persisted in the same story in two later examinations made at Paris, where he had been sent for trial, on February 27 and March 7. Then the terrible sentence of being torn asunder by four horses was decreed by the Parlement de Paris. The poor creature changed his testimony, and asserted that Coligny was innocent; he was interrogated twice again, and again he said that he alone had conceived the murder, and that Coligny, Soubise, La Rochefoucauld and the others whom he had accused, were innocent. But again, when the cords were tied to his arms and

legs, he cried out that Soubise and the Admiral and d'Andelot approved of the plot. Poor devil!

As to the Admiral's guilt, probably all Catholics believed in it, especially the Duke's widow, and his young son Henri, who was vowed to vengeance. The Huguenots, however greatly they rejoiced over Poltrot's deed, were fearful lest his accusation against the Admiral might make an unfavorable impression on the nation, and someone sent the Admiral a copy of Poltrot's depositions taken upon his first examination before the Queen, in order to give him the chance to deny the accusation categorically. I will cite several of Poltrot's assertions and the Admiral's answers:

*Deposition.* Poltrot went to Orléans, then in the hands of the Huguenots, and there saw M. de Feuquières the younger, and Captain Brion. These officers said that they knew he was a man of enterprise, and asked him if he would do a deed for the service of God and the honor of the King, for which he would be greatly praised; and as he was ready to listen, without further disclosure they bade him see the Admiral.

*Answer.* Coligny admits that he saw Poltrot in January, and that Feuquières said he had known Poltrot as a serviceable man, and that thereafter he, Coligny, employed Poltrot in the way that will appear hereafter.

*Deposition.* Poltrot said that Feuquières and Brion presented him to the Sieur de Châtillon (Coligny), who thereupon saw him alone in a cellar, and asked him if he was brave enough to go to the camp of M. de Guise, and kill him; and said that, in doing so, he would perform a meritorious action towards God and men. Poltrot said he had not courage enough, whereupon the Sieur de Châtillon bade him never to speak to anybody about the matter.

*Answer.* This is a lie. And please remark that Poltrot speaks of the Sieur de Châtillon, whereas among the Huguenots he is always

called the Admiral; that Poltrot makes him refer to the *Camp of M. de Guise*, in order to put a rebel phrase into his mouth, as the camp should be called the *Camp of the King*; and, third, that he makes the Admiral use the term "*meritorious service*," which Calvinists do not believe in, as all merit comes from the grace of God. Which mistakes show that the accusation is very suspicious.

*Deposition.* The Seigneur de Châtillon wrote to M. de Soubise to send Poltrot to him.

*Answer.* A denial; he did not know of Poltrot's existence then.

*Deposition.* M. de Soubise sent Poltrot with a package to the Sieur de Châtillon, and he delivered it at Ville-Franche.

*Answer.* True, but M. de Soubise did not write of any such plot; on the contrary, he asked to have Poltrot sent back to him, as he was in his employ.

*Deposition.* Châtillon bade Poltrot go to Orléans and wait for him.

*Answer.* I told him simply to go about his business.

*Deposition.* At Orléans the Sieur de Châtillon again urged him to undertake this noble and honorable act for the service of God and the State; nevertheless, Poltrot hesitated, and then Théodore de Bèze and another Huguenot clergyman came in and said he would be fortunate to carry his cross in this world, as Our Lord had carried His for our sakes, and if he died in so just a quarrel he would gain Paradise. Poltrot yielded, and they praised him, and said he was not the only one who had done such a deed, as there were many others who had undertaken similar labors. And the Sieur de Châtillon said there were more than fifty other gentlemen who had planned to do as much, and he gave him twenty crowns to go to M. de Guise.

*Answer.* This is all malicious invention, but in order to let it be known how he, Coligny, felt towards M. de Guise, he declares frankly that during the last commotions he had known that there were people who proposed to kill the said M. de Guise because of their hatred of him; but, so far from inducing or approving, he had dissuaded them, as Madame de Guise knew, for he had warned her both of time and place. But it was true that since the affair of Vassy, after they (the Huguenots) had taken up arms to defend the authority of the Edicts of the King, and defend the oppressed poor against the violence of the said Guise and of his adherents, he had held them as public enemies of God, of the King, and of the quiet of the Kingdom, and had acted against them as such. But, on his honor, it will not be found that he approved of any such attempt on the Duke's person, until he had been duly notified that the Duke of Guise and the Maréchal de Saint-André had suborned some men to kill the Prince de Condé, himself and M. d'Andelot, his brother—as he formerly declared at length to the Queen, outside Paris, and to the Constable at Orléans. Knowing that, he admitted that, since that time, when he heard anyone say that, if he could, he would kill the Duke of Guise, even in his camp, he did not turn him from his purpose; but on his honor he had not sought, induced nor solicited any man to do this, whether by words, by money, or by promises, of himself or through others, directly or indirectly. And as to the twenty crowns mentioned before, he admitted it was true that on his last return to Orléans, about the end of last January, after M. de Feuquières had told him that he knew Poltrot for a serviceable man, he decided to employ him to learn news of the enemy's camp, and for that purpose he gave him twenty crowns, without saying anything further to him, and with no mention whatever of murdering M. de Guise. For, far from having such a plan, he would not have trusted Poltrot, for even on sending him to the royalist camp on the errand mentioned he was suspicious of him, as he said to M.

de Grammont who happened to be present. Nevertheless he did send him for news of the enemy's camp. . . .

At this point Théodore de Bèze put in his denials. He had done no more than petition the King, the Queen, and the King of Navarre to punish the slaughter at Vassy by due course of justice; but since then, as the Guises and their faction had taken up arms, and right and justice were no more, he had done his best, by preaching, by letters and by word of mouth, to urge the Prince de Condé, the Admiral, and other lords and gentlemen followers of the Gospel, to uphold by all means the authority of the Edicts, and to use arms "*en la plus grande modestie qu'il est possible*," and (preserving the honor of God) try for peace, without letting themselves be tricked. And as for the Duc de Guise (for he always considered him the principal author and fosterer of these troubles), he admitted that he had infinitely desired and prayed God, either to change the said Guise's heart (which he had never been able to hope for) or to rid the Kingdom of him, but he had never spoken to Poltrot in person, nor through others, and had never known him in any way whatever. Nevertheless he recognized in it the just judgment of God, and a threat of similar or greater punishment upon all sworn enemies of His Holy Gospel, and those who were the cause of the misery in the Kingdom. And as to what Poltrot said about "carrying his cross," he, Bèze, was not so ill prepared for his office, nor did he so misapply the Scripture, as to have said "*carry his cross*," and still less to say "*that men gain Paradise*," and so he sent all Poltrot's confession back to the shop where it was manufactured.

*Deposition.* Poltrot had afterwards reported to the Sieur de Châtillon at Orléans that the task was too difficult, as the Duke was always escorted; but Châtillon and Bèze encouraged him, & he agreed to go ahead, and then Châtillon gave him a hundred crowns to buy a good horse, if his was not fast enough to save him after the deed was done.



*(Photograph by Giraudon)*

Jacques d'Albon, Maréchal de Saint-André



*Answer.* Poltrot could not have seen the Admiral at Orléans, because he was not there, having already gone to Normandy; and his brother d'Andelot was suspicious of Poltrot and suggested arresting him, but the Admiral thought he could secure news of Guise's camp through him, and in order to mount him better for the sake of speed gave him the hundred crowns. Besides, the Admiral remembers now that Poltrot came up to him to make his report, and said it would be easy to kill M. de Guise—but the Admiral never dwelt on this matter, and never, on his honor, opened his mouth to incite him to undertake it.

*Deposition.* (Poltrot tells how he had bought a Spanish horse, from a gentleman of the Duke's suite, in exchange for the hundred crowns and his own crop-eared nag that he had ridden before, and then recounts how he murdered the Duke.)

*Answer.* The foregoing concerns Poltrot only, so I leave it to him; praising God nevertheless for his just judgment.

*Deposition.* Poltrot then said he thought La Rochefoucauld privy to the plot, but not the Prince de Condé.

*Answer.* The Admiral stigmatizes this as an attempt to sow dissension among the Huguenots.

After more accusations and answers, the Admiral demanded to be confronted with Poltrot, and asked that his life be spared until then. And added, "Do not think that what I have said is out of regret for the death of the Duc de Guise, for I think it is the greatest good that could happen to this Kingdom and to the Church of God, and particularly to me and my family, and also because, if it please Her Majesty the Queen, it will be the means of bringing peace." (Dated Caen, March 12, 1563.)

The evidence rests there. The fleet horse is the only suspicious fact as to actual complicity. The Admiral appears, at best, in the light of an ingenious casuist: he was told that Poltrot planned to

murder the Duc de Guise, he neither did nor said anything to dissuade or divert him from his purpose, and he gave him a hundred crowns to buy a fleet horse. Henri, the new Duc de Guise, always believed him to be a murderer and a liar. Bossuet (quoted by Vaissière) remarked a hundred years later: "Nothing can be idler than what the Admiral says to excuse himself. He says that when Poltrot spoke to him about killing the Duc de Guise, he, the Admiral, never opened his mouth to incite him to execute his purpose. There was no need to incite a man whose resolution had been so firmly taken; in order for him to accomplish his design, all that was necessary was to do what the Admiral did, send him to the place where he could execute it. And the Admiral, not content with sending him there, gave him the money to get there and make the necessary preparations for such a plan, even to the point of mounting him well."

## CHAPTER XXII

### THE SECOND CIVIL WAR

As a matter of fact the Duke's death did facilitate peace, but not *le bon paix* that he desired. The motives that brought it about were not so pure as his. The Queen Mother wanted it because she dreaded a victory by either party and wished to get out of captivity. So did the Prince de Condé, who had a special longing for liberty, as he was tired of his wife and admired one of the Queen's *escadron volant*, a flying squad of pretty ladies, "dressed like goddesses," whom the Queen kept about her, not without a purpose. So peace was made, and its terms were embodied in the Edict of Amboise, March, 1563. By this Edict liberty of conscience was granted to the Protestants; nobles and landed gentry were allowed to worship within their houses, townsfolk only in one town per bailiwick, and the country folk were ignored. The Constable and Condé regained their freedom. The peace benefited the nobles, and nobody else; and an unsatisfactory peace is, as experience teaches us, of no great use. Besides, the vendetta between the families of Guise and Châtillon still threatened to revive civil war. The great mass of the people longed for peace; so the pressing matter was to settle the vendetta. But it seems a rule of universal application that a peaceful settlement of a passionate quarrel hangs high on moonbeams out of human reach.

Henri de Guise was in the first vehemence of adolescence, and every feeling, instinctive or acquired, of filial, family, tribal duty kept him brooding over revenge; and his mother, like Electra with Orestes, urged him on. Coligny, for his part, did not render a friendly settlement easy. He published a declaration that "the

Duke was the one man in the enemy's army, whom he had searched for in the Battle of Dreux. . . . If he could have aimed a cannon to kill him, he would have done so; if he had had ten thousand harquebusiers, he would have ordered them to shoot at him out from among all the others, whether in the open, or from over a wall, or behind a hedge. He would not have spared a single means, allowed by the laws of war, to rid himself, and many other loyal subjects of the King, of so great an enemy as he was." The Guises, on their part, clamored for justice; they asked that Coligny be tried by the Parlement de Paris, a tribunal passionately devoted to the late Duke. The Prince de Condé contended that a less partial tribunal would be more likely to assuage private quarrels. The Queen, always temporizing, suggested that the Parlement and the Grand Conseil should sit together, discarding judges who were open to the suspicion of partisanship. A fourth plan was adopted. A decree was issued forbidding the friends of the Duke on the one side, and those of the Admiral on the other, from giving or taking offense with respect to the Duke's death, with a provision that the King himself, as the Huguenots objected to the Parlement de Paris and the Guisards to the Grand Conseil, would proceed to a judicial investigation, as soon as he had disposed of certain serious business. Nevertheless, one day as the King, a boy of twelve, issued from church, he was confronted by a long procession in funeral weeds—the venerable Duchess Antoinette, mother of the murdered Duke, the Duchess of Guise, his widow, his brothers, d'Aumale, Elbeuf and the Cardinal de Guise, his cousin the Cardinal de Bourbon, and the Dukes of Montpensier, Longueville and Nemours, and a troop of friends, who besought him to allow them to proceed in the pursuit of justice, and free them from the ignominy of ingratitude, from the shame of breaking that duty which the laws of God, of Nature and of men, whether Christian or infidel, imposed upon them. The King replied, "I have heard it said that God causes kings to reign for the sake of justice," and gave them permission. But his prudent

mother thought differently, and, after reflection, it was decided that for good and sufficient reasons the King would hold the matter in suspense for three years. This gave the young Duke time to grow up.

Henry of Lorraine, now Duc de Guise, was a son to delight a mother's heart and make a father proud. One day, just before the fatal tournament, King Henry II was dandling his little daughter Margot in his lap, and seeing young Guise, a boy of nine, with his white skin and fair hair, and another boy, the little Marquis de Beaupré, playing together, asked her which of the two she liked the better. "I prefer the Marquis, he is gentler and more sensible." "Oh," said her father, "but Guise is handsomer." "Yes," she answered, "but he is always in mischief, and wants to be the master in everything." Henry of Guise was a precocious boy. At the age of six or seven he wrote a letter to his father who was then campaigning in Italy:

"I have been hearing some fine sermons that my uncle [the Cardinal of Lorraine] preached at Reims, but I promise you I can't repeat them at length, because they were very long and I don't remember half. He made me wear his amice [a kind of ecclesiastical collar] in his presence, and asked me if I did not want to be a canon at Reims. I told him I had much rather be with you to break a lance or a sword on some bold Spaniard or Burgundian, to show that I have a good arm, for I had rather fence and break lances than to be shut up all the time in an abbey and wear a gown. . . . I have become pretty good. . . . You told Grandmother that I was obstinate, but Fosséz [his hunting master] proves the contrary, for if I was, he wouldn't spare the birch."

At the age of eight he was taught to shoulder a pike. The Maréchal de Monluc recounts how he was with his battalion, and the officers in their places, when Henri de Guise and a cousin of his own age, both "*beaux à merveilles*," with their tutors and attend-

ants came riding up on their ponies. He called out, "Hi! Hi! my little Princes—get off, put foot to the ground; I was bred in the House from which you spring. I want to be the first to make you shoulder arms." The boys dismounted, and Monluc undid the ribbons on their shoulders and gave each a pike to carry, and said, "I hope God will grant you grace to resemble your fathers, and that I shall bring you good luck by being the first to make you shoulder arms. May God make you as valiant as you are handsome." Then he made them march, side by side, pike on shoulder, up and down in front of the battalion, and everyone present indulged in happy predictions.

A little older, he was sent to school at the Collège de Navarre, in Paris, together with Prince Henry, afterwards Henry III, and the Prince de Béarn, afterwards Henry IV; but not for long, since his father took him and his younger brother, the Marquis de Mayenne, on his campaigns during the summer after the capture of Calais. At the siege of Orléans, 1562, he had already given evidence of his *sang-froid*. He grew to be a tall, large, handsome young man, with a noble face, lively, attracting eyes, a calm forehead surmounted by fair curly hair, and of a graceful carriage. His manners were very affable, and he had an engaging gift of speech, even eloquence, and when he wished could talk with great force and persuasiveness. In all bodily exercises he was beyond compare in strength and skill, whether at tennis, wrestling, fencing, or swimming, and so forth. He could put all his armor on and swim upstream against the current. His constitution was very strong; he could endure fatigue, want of sleep, or the presence of danger with amazing ease and fortitude. He was intelligent, high-minded, generous and early mature, of clear judgment, very clever in understanding people, with a great gift for business, and a power of rapid determination and action; he was also very ambitious for power and glory. He courted popularity, and won it. King Henry III asked, "What does the Duc de Guise do, to charm everybody?" "Sire," answered the courtier, "he does kindness to everybody;

if his benefactions are not given directly, they arrive indirectly; when he has not an opportunity to oblige by deeds, he obliges by words; there is no celebration that he does not attend, no baptism where he is not godfather, no funeral that he does not follow; he is courteous, friendly, open, he is nice to everybody, and speaks ill of no one; in short, he has the brilliant bearing of a king."

At a later period Agrippa d'Aubigné, the celebrated Huguenot, full of partisanship, wrote these ironical verses:

*Par tout je trouve un Duc de Guise  
 Si humble, si doux, si humain,  
 Et si jamais je ne l'advise  
 Qu'il n'ait le bonnet à la main,  
 S'il trouve un marchand par la rue,  
 Le gueux, la vieille ou l'artisan,  
 Surtout un prêtre, il les salue*

....

*Que je le pense bien connaître:  
 Ce matois fait tout sur ma foi  
 En serviteur pour être maître  
 En valex pour devenir Roi.*

He's everywhere, this Duke of Guise,  
 Humble and sweet, resolved to please,  
 I always see him ride, or stand  
 Barehead, with bonnet in his hand,  
 To pass a huckster in the street,  
 A beggar or an old woman,  
 Or, it may be, an artisan,  
 He ducks his bonnet to his feet,  
 And, if a priest he chance to spy,  
 His courtesies tenfold multiply.

....

But in good truth, I know him now,  
 This slyboots does all this, I trow,  
 Serving, that he may master be  
 And mount at last to Royalty.

But even the satirical d'Aubigné says: "I put Henri de Guise in the rank of statesmen, if ever there were such." And Guez de Balzac (1594-1654) says: "France went crazy about this man; it is not enough to say she was in love with him . . . her passion bordered on idolatry. . . . Some people invoked him in their prayers, others put engravings of him in their breviaries. His picture was everywhere; people ran after him in the street to touch his cloak with their beads. . . . Great crowds have been seen to subside at sight of his handsome face. No heart could withstand his countenance, he persuaded before opening his mouth, it was impossible in his presence not to wish him well. . . . I have heard that a courtier of those days said that Huguenots, when they gazed at the Duc de Guise, joined the League."

On his father's death, at his father's dying request, the Queen appointed him, in his father's place, *grand maître* and *grand chambellan*, and captain of a company of men-at-arms, but during his young years his uncle d'Aumale was to act for him.

The Queen having, as she hoped, pigeonholed the dangerous vendetta, conceived the plan of carrying the young King, who had lately attained his majority, on a long tour through the provinces of France, in the belief that his presence would arouse loyalty to the crown and help bring peace to the distracted land. The King's brother Henry was of the party, also young Henry of Navarre, as well as Henry of Guise. It was the second time that the three Henrys found themselves together. The tour lasted for two years, but the most interesting part of it was the visit to Bayonne, very near the Spanish border, where they met Queen Elizabeth, Catherine's daughter, wife of Philip II, also the Duke of Alva and other Spanish grandees. There were great festivities. De Thou speaks of "tournaments, balls and all sorts of diversions, given in order to display the wealth and power of France to a proud nation, and to oppose French vanity to Spanish ostentation. Pierre Ronsard, whom I am not afraid to call the greatest poet that has appeared since the Age of Augustus, was invited to the inter-

view, and went with pleasure. He composed some noble verses which he recited, and today they are in everybody's hands, and are read with delight and admiration for the rare genius that composed them." But behind the curtain of these merrymakings there were very serious conversations as to the best method of extirpating heretics from France. Philip II felt himself as much interested as the King of France, for from France great moral support and considerable material help, in the way of arms, ammunitions, supplies and volunteers, went to the aid of the Protestants in the Low Countries, who were not only heretics but also rebels against his authority. The Huguenots believed afterwards that Catherine and Alva had agreed on the massacre of St. Bartholomew. That is not just, there is no truth in it. The Duc de Montpensier's confessor did say to the Duke of Alva that the quickest way to straighten matters would be to cut off the heads of the Prince de Condé, the Admiral, d'Andelot, La Rochefoucauld and Grammont, but that was his own happy idea; the Duke of Alva denied making any suggestion of violence. The worst the Queen could have promised was to revoke the Edict of Amboise and to take measures to punish the heretics in her Kingdom; if she did make such a promise, she disregarded it. The chief effect of the interview was that the Protestants, "*gens fort soupçonneux*," naturally surmised that Catherine and Philip had concocted all sorts of deviltries against them. As a matter of fact, French and Spanish adventurers came to blows in America, and set the two governments by the ears.

At any rate the Huguenots were becoming very restless, and when the Court had, on its tour, come back from Bayonne as far as Moulins, the Queen, apprehensive, as she had every reason to be, lest the vendetta between the Guises and the Châtillons should start civil war again, summoned the heads of the two factions and compelled them to shake hands and swear to mutual amity. The Admiral purged himself by oath from all guilt, and the King declared him innocent. So Anne d'Este, the widowed Duchess, and the Cardinal of Lorraine and the Admiral went through the cere-

mony of reconciliation. De Thou says Henri de Guise was there, and that his brilliant qualities and his father's virtues were apparent at once, and adds that by the expression of his face it was easy to see that, though he did not formally reject the reconciliation, he did not hold himself obliged to keep the articles agreed to by the others, and that when the occasion should present itself he would not be lacking in audacity or energy. But De Thou, probably right about young Guise's feelings, was wrong about his presence at the meeting. At all events, whether his family had noticed such an expression on his face, and deemed it best to send him away for a while, or whether they wanted him to see the world, he had already gone with a company of young French nobles to join the Emperor, who was fighting against the Turks in Hungary. A letter to his stepfather, the Duke de Nemours, the paragon of charming but not Puritanical gentlemen, who had recently married the widowed Duchess of Guise, tells of his journey. He begs for a continuation of the Duke's kindness, and assures him he shall have no more obedient a son, and adds "I beseech you to excuse me for not writing with my own hand, for I arrived here very late, and must leave at three o'clock, as is necessary in travelling through a country like Savoy; we have already met two bears."

From Savoy he journeyed by Augsburg and Ratisbon part of the way down the Danube, during which one of the attendant boats hit a rock, and two servants, a sailor and two horses were drowned, and reached Vienna on August 12, just as the Emperor was leaving for the front. Henri was sixteen, but bore himself like a grown man. He begged the Emperor to excuse him for coming with so scant an escort, "but if Your Majesty will allow me to stay in Vienna seven or eight days, I hope with God's help to act with such diligence that I shall be able to return to your Majesty with such equipment as you will be content with, for I have come from France for the sole purpose of employing my life to do you some little service." All sorts of people of consequence came to pay their respects to him, and in Vienna the Spanish ambassador took him



*(Photograph by Giraudon)*

The three Coligny brothers—Cardinal Odet, the Admiral and D'Andelot



about, to see the Empress, her daughters, and inspect ships and soldiers. Then, with his suite, well-mounted and armed, he returned to the Imperial camp. The Emperor was incompetent, and the Turks made gains; but the Sultan died, and, with winter coming on, military matters came to a halt. So Guise returned to Munich, where rumour began to whisper that this handsome young man was betrothed to the daughter of the Prince of Bavaria. But he wrote to his uncle, the Cardinal, that "he had seen well-bred young princesses, but as he had been at Munich so little time (five days) he had not had time to do them much homage, and he had no thought of marrying." So, he went home, having left a good impression — "*fort agréable*" — and found everything in great commotion.

The Protestants of the Low Countries were in revolt against Spain, and Philip sent the Duke of Alva from Milan, with an army, through Savoy and Franche-Comté to suppress them. The French Protestants were alarmed; they suspected that here were the first fruits of the colloquies at Bayonne, that this Spanish army was intended to attack them, and asked that six thousand Switzers be hired for defense in case of need. This was done; the Switzers were hired. Then, after Alva had marched past the French frontier into the Low Countries, they began to fear that the Queen Mother intended to use these very Switzers against them, and asked that they be dismissed, but the Constable, as General-in-Chief, refused; the Swiss had received their pay and he was going to keep them. Everybody got angry. D'Andelot, Colonel-General of infantry, was in a huff because a Catholic marshal would not obey him. Condé asked to be made Lieutenant-General, but Henri of Anjou, the King's arrogant young brother, rudely interfered and said that that office belonged to him. Condé, in a rage, left the Court (July 11, 1567). Obviously civil war was close round the corner.

Meanwhile the Catholics, having seen what an advantage the opposing minority had had from their better organization, had

begun to form little leagues, that might well, as time went on, coalesce in one great league. It was obviously better for the Huguenots not to wait, but to seize the benefit of the offensive, and they did. They also realized what an advantage possession of the King's person would be, and, remembering very well the precedent the Triumvirs had set them of kidnapping Francis II at Fontainebleau, they plotted to kidnap little King Charles. Straggling bands of Huguenots began to come up from all about. In this there was nothing alarming, for noblemen were in the habit of travelling with a retinue of armed retainers; nevertheless the Court, which had come to the Château of Montceaux, near Meaux, where the King liked to hunt, was sufficiently on its guard to send spies to Châtillon-Coligny (the Admiral's home), a little town in the Orléanais, a dozen miles northeast of Gien, to see what he was doing. They found him "*Essigolant ses antes et une serpe dans la main*," dressed in laboring clothes, clipping his trees with a pruning-hook and occupied in superintending the preparations for the grape-gathering.

Rumours of a plot drifted in; the Constable, with his usual sagacity, said it was nonsense, that not a hundred men could be gathered together without his knowing it. The Chancellor went further and threatened to hang such rumour-mongers. Then messages came that a strong force of Huguenots were marching towards Lagny, between them and Paris, scarce a dozen miles away. The Court in hot haste took refuge in the fortress of Meaux, and summoned the Swiss mercenaries, who were stationed at Château-Thierry. With such an escort it seemed safe to march the twenty-five miles to Paris, and on September 28, 1567, they started. They set out before light, the Swiss, with their long pikes, formed in a hollow square, with the royal party, the carts and baggage in the center. At daybreak a troop of Huguenot cavalry appeared, with Condé at their head; he asked to speak to the King. No answer was vouchsafed; Condé rode back to the troop, and they ranged themselves for a charge—"ils trouvoient chose délicieuse de charger

*les Suisses.*" The Swiss fell into defense formation, the front rank on their knees, and presented bristling rows of pikes. The Huguenot horse, far fewer in numbers, were not clad in heavy armor, and a charge would have been worse than reckless. They rode alongside the King's army for several hours. After fording a little river the Constable felt easier, and the Court arrived safely at Le Bourget, where the Swiss encamped. The Duc d'Aumale, with several hundred well-armed gentlemen, rode out from Paris to meet them, and escorted the King into the city, where he was received with acclamations.

The King and his mother had been thoroughly frightened, and they were correspondingly angry; to make matters worse, news came from the provinces of more uprisings; Montereau, Orléans, Nîmes, had been surprised and captured by the Huguenots. At Nîmes the Protestants had collected priests, monks and Catholic notables in the court of the Bishop's palace, where they cut their throats and threw them into the well. Putting these incidents one side, the Huguenots announced their demands. They protested against the influence of the Guises and against the presence of the Swiss army; they demanded dismissal of the Italian financiers, Birague, Gondi and others, who had come to Paris in the train of Catherine de Médicis, and they demanded freedom of worship and convocation of the States-General. They asserted that the nobility and burgesses had a right to share in the government. The King answered by sending a herald to summon the rebels to surrender (October 7, 1567). To this Condé responded by an attempt to besiege Paris. Condé was, as usual, full of spirit, ready "to drink up Esil, eat a crocodile," and now with an available army of three thousand men, half horse, half foot, without cannon, he undertook to besiege Paris, garrisoned by an army of eighteen thousand foot, and three thousand horse, under the command of the valiant old Constable.

After much hesitation the Catholics marched out to attack the besiegers on the plains between Paris and Saint-Denis, and opened

with a cannonade. The Protestants charged. There was confused fighting in various places; here the Protestants gained, there the Catholics. Condé's horse was killed under him, while Coligny, mounted on a Turkish steed with a hard mouth, had the reins of his bridle cut, and the horse, uncontrollable, carried him headlong towards the city in the midst of a band of routed Catholics. For a time it was believed that he had been swept into Paris, and the Queen had a search made for him, but he had escaped. Undoubtedly the Protestants would have been overwhelmed had not the Constable been killed. His battalion, attacked on three sides by Condé, the Cardinal of Châtillon and the Vidame de Chartres, ran away and left their general to his fate. A soldier of fortune, Robert Stuart, one of the Scotch mercenaries in the Huguenot army, rode up and bade him surrender. For answer the old man with the hilt of his sword smashed three of Stuart's teeth; then he was shot, but his friends rallied to his rescue, and carried him, with half a dozen wounds, into Paris. Montaigne comments: "The beauty and glory of his death, within the view of his King and of Paris, in their service, fighting, at the head of an army victorious because of his generalship, against his near kin, and in extreme old age, seemis to me to deserve to be reckoned among the remarkable events of my time."

The Constable's fatal wound halted the Royal army, and gave Condé time to withdraw his forces; he proceeded eastward to meet reinforcements, hired from the Palatinate. With twenty thousand men he marched back towards Paris. But both sides wanted peace. Catherine de Médicis realized that, with all his faults, the Constable was a great loss, and she grew more afraid of a Protestant victory; Condé had no money to pay his German mercenaries, and they might leave at any minute; and the Protestant noblemen had had their fill of fighting, and wanted to go home. So, on March 23, 1568, peace was again made; the Treaty of Longjumeau re-established the Edict of Amboise, just as it had been. The Huguenots had gained nothing.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### THE BATTLE OF JARNAC

THE Edicts of Peace were little more than confessions of lassitude, and, after a breathing space, were soon ignored and forgotten. The attempt to kidnap the King, being unsuccessful, proved to have been a great tactical mistake; it removed the King and Queen from the position that the Queen had been struggling to maintain, of impartial sovereignty above faction, put them definitely in that of partisan chiefs, and made the Catholic party uncontestedly the royal party. It also aroused the Catholics to fury. Pamphleteers raved against the Prince de Condé. For instance, one scribbler reported a contract between the Prince and the King: "Between Louis de Condé, styled of the House of Bourbon, King of Heretics, Prince of Robbers, Protector-General of murderers, brigands, outlaws, incendiaries, adulterers, forgers, and Standard-Bearer of Foreigners; together with Odet and Gaspard, called the Coligny brothers, their factors, deputies, representatives, accomplices and adherents, parties of the first part; and Charles of Valois, formerly King of France, at present King of Paris, Saint-Maur and the Forest of Vincennes, Captain and Doorkeeper of the Château du Louvre, and the Catholic People of France, parties of the second part. . . . Now, after hearing all the Devils in Hell for the Parties of the first part . . . and God Almighty not being heard, nor called into consultation. . . . It is decreed that the parties of the first part, their accomplices and adherents, for the damnation of their souls, are permitted to hold diabolical conventicles [etc, etc.]"

The fury of the pamphlets was outdone by that of the deeds. D'Aubigné, the Huguenot historian, says that in three months the

Catholics murdered ten thousand people. More than ever the words apply with which Seigneur de la Noue opens his book about these troubled times: "The Kingdom of France is going gradually downhill and will soon have a heavy fall, unless God in His sovereign goodness sustains it, and provide remedies to set her on her feet again, and we prove willing to use them." Each side complained bitterly of the other, and both with reason. The Catholics said that the Huguenots did not fulfill their promises, they did not surrender the fortresses they had seized, they would not let the King's governor enter La Rochelle, and that many of them went to the Netherlands to fight with the rebels against King Philip, King Charles's ally. The Protesants retorted that it was the Catholics who broke their agreements; they alleged that the Prince de Condé was in danger, that the Cardinal of Lorraine had bidden the King heed the Duke of Alva's saying, that the head of a salmon was worth the heads of fifty frogs, and that a new Spanish society, calling themselves Jesuits, were preaching that no man need keep faith with heretics, that it was a pious deed to kill them, and that all Christians should take up arms to exterminate them.

And across the border the Duke of Alva was acting upon his saying, without, however, overlooking the frogs. In June, 1568, he cut off the heads of Egmont and Horn. Catherine de Médicis may have pondered over this action; also the Prince de Condé and Coligny. But Condé, always of a high and fiery spirit, did not hesitate to write the King a letter of grievances, and ended by saying that the lords and gentlemen of the Protestant religion, for the sake of preventing greater evils that threatened the Kingdom, had resolved, by common consent, to make war against the Cardinal of Lorraine, and against him only, and that they regarded him as an infamous priest, a tiger and a tyrant, and that they would always pursue his adherents and partisans as perjurors and brigands and violators of public faith—in a word, as enemies of the peace of the Kingdom. This was saying a great deal, and

prudence suggested that Condé had better get out of reach; so he retired to Noyen, a little town near Châtillon, and Coligny, likewise, repaired to a village near there. It was not long before Condé became aware of spies sneaking about; one was measuring the height of the town walls, and another counting the garrison and observing its methods of keeping watch. The Maréchal de Tavannes, who had been ordered by the Queen to capture him, saw to it that mysterious communications came into his hands: "The hunt is afoot, the stag is in the toils."

Condé waited no longer. He and Coligny fled incontinently; Condé had his wife, who was *enceinte*, and all his children, three of whom were in the cradle; Coligny had a grown-up daughter and several little children, some in the arms of nurses. D'Andelot's wife, who was with them, had a baby two years old. They hurried as fast as they could, and reached the river Loire in safety. The river is usually deep water still higher up; nevertheless in a few places it can be forded. One such ford was at Sancerre, and they crossed. Behind them the river suddenly swelled; and when their pursuers the next day arrived on the further bank it was not fordable, and dangerous for boats. They compared their escape to that of the Children of Israel crossing the Red Sea, knelt down and chanted the hymn:

*In exitu Israel de Egypto, domus Jacob  
de populo barbaro:  
Facta est Iudea sanctificatio ejus,  
Israel potestas ejus.  
Mare vidit et fugit: Jordanis  
Conversus est retrorsum.  
Montes exultaverunt ut arietes:  
et colles, sicut agni ovium.*

When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob  
from a people of strange language;  
Judah was his sanctuary, and Israel his  
dominion.

The sea saw it, and fled: Jordan was driven  
back.

The mountains skipped like rams, and the  
little hills like lambs.

(Psalm 114)

But this did not prevent them from remembering the wrongs the Catholics had done, and they robbed and pillaged as they went. At La Rochelle they were greeted with great demonstrations of joy, and there d'Andelot joined them, and the Queen of Navarre and her son Henry, aged sixteen.

The coming of Henry of Navarre marks the full arrival of the third generation of our *dramatis personae*. François I, his sister Marguerite, and Claude of Guise were born respectively in 1494, 1492 and 1496; their children, Henri II, Jeanne d'Albret, and François de Guise, in 1519, 1528 and 1519; and their grandchildren, Henry of Anjou, Henry of Navarre, and Henry of Guise, in 1551, 1553 and 1550. This third generation now supersedes the second and usurps the stage. Henry of Anjou, his mother's darling, was, as Lieutenant-General, in nominal command of the royal army, and marched against La Rochelle. It is needless to go into details, but since there seems to be a tradition in the Protestant world that the Huguenots were Christians of an apostolic type, I will quote the reasonably impartial De Thou, who tells how the garrison of La Rochelle sallied forth and captured a Catholic town, Saint-Michel-en-l'Herme, a little fortress a dozen miles to the north. The conquerors "killed all they met, without distinction of sex or age; galleries, cellars, cisterns were so full of dead bodies that they spewed forth blood. A fellow named Forteau distinguished himself above the others; he amused himself with plunging his arm up to the elbow in the blood of these wretches, and, in order to prolong the pleasure of killing, with his own hand, in cold blood, he set aside one batch of victims for the morrow, and another for the day after. . . . It is said that more than four hundred perished in this horrible butchery. Forteau was left in command of the

town with the duty of destroying its fortifications, its church and monastery, . . . which task he performed thoroughly, spending a month over it." The Catholics gave tit for tat. When the Duke of Anjou took the Huguenot towns of Ruffec and Melle, he put the garrisons to the sword.

No battle in the open took place till the following March. Henri de Guise, who was serving in the Catholic army, was growing very impatient. His stepfather, the Duc de Nemours, was in command on the German frontier, and young Guise was doubtful as to whether he had not better have gone there; he was fretting to distinguish himself. He wrote to the Duke,

"I hate to stay in this useless place. The army is losing a great number of men, some go away sick, and some for their affairs, so, that unless something is done to remedy this, it will soon be very small. It is true that the same is happening to the enemy, their men are disbanding all the time. Nevertheless, I foresee that it will be a long time before we shall have much fighting here; we must wait till the men come back, and that may take some time. I shall be greatly grieved if you have a battle before us, at least unless I am with you. And if you overlook me I shall complain of you before God and the world, but you are really too fond of me to let me suffer such shame."

However, fighting came his way. The Huguenot forces (as Guise said) had not completely reassembled since going into winter quarters, but Condé always wanted to fight, and Coligny held some dogmas common to military men, and believed "*qu'il allait de son honneur*" not to let the enemy advance farther without a battle; so, instead of waiting for all their men to come up, they went into battle by the river Charente, near the town of Jarnac. Henri de Guise acted rashly, and was nearly caught. However, the Duc d'Anjou, guided by the Maréchal de Tavannes, won a complete victory (March 13, 1569). Coligny escaped, but the Prince de

Condé was taken prisoner and killed. A little light of human feeling comes in the midst of their fratricidal strife. On the Prince's body various papers were found, one of which was a letter from his sister-in-law, Antoine's widow. It says,

“You are good enough to tell me that my son [Henry of Navarre] is well. I am very glad, & I hope he will behave to you as if you were his father. I beg God . . . dear Brother, to give you a long life.

“Your servant,

“JEHANNE.”

Stories differ, but that usually accepted says that the Prince surrendered on the promise of two officers that his life should be safe, but that a Captain Montesquiou, of the Duc d'Anjou's Swiss guard, recognized him and shot him. The body was propped on a she-ass and led into Jarnac, and there laid huggermugger on a stone outside the Duc d'Anjou's lodgings. It is said that young Guise told Anjou that Montesquiou should be disavowed and punished, so that a murder, committed in violation of military honor, could not be attributed to the King's brother. The Duc d'Anjou was not so thin-skinned. A courier carrying news of the victory reached Metz, where the King was, at midnight; the King got out of bed and went, attended by all his Court, to the cathedral, where the *Te Deum* was sung, and he ordered a public thanksgiving throughout the Kingdom. And all the Catholic world rejoiced. Pope Pius V (April 15, 1569) wrote to the Duc de Guise:

“Since I have written to the King to congratulate him on the victory achieved by his arms over the enemies of religion, I do not wish to omit to compliment you, also, on the great courage you showed in the battle, and on your attachment to the Catholic religion. . . . I should have liked to send you a present, were I not hard pressed



*(Photograph by Giraudon)*

Louis de Bourbon, Prince de Condé



for money, but in recompence you will receive celestial favors, in comparison with which all earthly favors are as nothing."

Nevertheless young Guise—he was barely nineteen—had by no means had his fill of fighting. Two months were hardly up when we find him again writing to his stepfather:

"I am mighty vexed to hear that you are so near the enemy, without my having the luck to be with you to take my share in the noble exploits that will present themselves. But, though the Duc d'Anjou time and time again has refused me leave to go, I shall importune him so much that he must allow me, and then I shall make such speed that the game won't be played without me, for I am sure you would be as much displeased as I myself, if I were to lose a sight so necessary to me as this coming battle, which I pray Our Lord to make you win (May 7, 1569)."

In the meantime Coligny had collected the scattered remnants of the Huguenot army at Cognac, and there the intrepid Queen of Navarre joined them and presented her son, Henry, now sixteen, as tutelar commander-in-chief, though of course Coligny had full power. Having secured a force of German mercenaries, he was able again to make head against the enemy. At La Roche-l'Abeille, some sixteen miles south of Limoges, he won a victory. Few prisoners were made. The Huguenot soldiers, according to their own historian, d'Aubigné, behaved "like devils incarnate," they murdered the Catholic peasants by hundreds, and in one château massacred two hundred and sixty persons in cold blood.

Such were some of the incidents unexpectedly arising from differences of opinion concerning the Christian creed.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### GUISE AT POITIERS

THE town of Poitiers lies on a hill and along its slopes. It is something more than a mile long, and roughly, very roughly, of the shape of South America, with a great Grecian bend to the east. The hypotenuse of this triangle, the western side, is well protected by a little river—the Boivre—and a marsh; the two other sides of the triangle, the northeastern and southeastern, are bordered by the little river Clain, which flows northward to join the Loire. The city was girdled round with walls and towers (you can still see a bit of the old ramparts at the southern corner of the town, with its tower, the Tour à l'Oiseau); and within the circuit of the walls, hard by the river Clain, there were vineyards and gardens on the low ground before you came to the steep rise of the hill. Poitiers is a charming town, as every tourist knows, full of *monuments historiques*, all touched with beauty, charm and the tender graces of antiquity. Notre-Dame-la-Grande stood in the middle of the city, in all its Romanesque finery, of sculptured and arcaded façade, and, within, of pillars with storied capitals and solemn arches that seem to stoop to catch whispered prayers and speed them in echoes upward. Near by was the palace, sacred because once Joan of Arc was there. Down toward the jutting of the Grecian bend come first the Cathedral, built by Henry II of England and Eleanor of Aquitaine, with the great twelfth-century window of the Crucifixion; then the immemorial Baptistry of Saint-Jean, and near the Clain, in the apex of the bend, the lovely and lovable Church of Sainte-Radegonde, dedicated to the wife of some old Merovingian King and patron saint of the city. And, finally, Saint-

Hilaire, with its series of aisles on either side of the nave and its great bell tower, said to have been built in the time of Charlemagne, lies towards the sharp southern angle of the town. Poitiers was a rich city, situated on the great highway that came up from Bordeaux and ran on to Tours, Orléans and Paris; its venerable relics had attracted many pilgrims there, and its university was nearly a hundred and fifty years old.

Coligny, strong for the moment in his German mercenaries, decided, perhaps reluctantly, for there were military reasons against it, to attack the city; he needed money to pay his soldiers, and the riches there would come in handy. The inhabitants had already had experience of Huguenot occupations, and were resolved to defend themselves against another to the utmost. In 1562 the Huguenots had captured the city; they pillaged the Cathedral, defaced or destroyed the rood loft, the organ, the fonts and ironwork; they pillaged the church of Sainte-Radegonde, broke open her tomb and burnt her body; they sacked the abbey of Saint-Hilaire, stole the bell, destroyed the holy relics, and, collecting all the sacred ecclesiastical vessels they could, pyxes, chalices, reliquaries, and so forth, melted them down. And only a short time before, the town had received another visit from the *sectistes calviniens*, and the townsfolk prayed that that should be the last. The Commandant, the Comte de Lude, had a small garrison of regular soldiers and several thousand citizen militia, together with a few hundred horse, but too few to defend so wide a circuit of walls. However, young Guise, who had been chafing at inaction, as soon as he heard that Coligny meant to attack the town hurried there, accompanied by his brother, Mayenne, a tall lad of fifteen, and by a band of young nobles, with mouth-filling names—René de Rochechouart Mortemar, Paul Chabot de Clairvaux, Philippe de Chateaubriant, Seigneur des Roches-Baritault, Guillaume de Hautemer, François de Casillac de Cessac, and such. The citizens were greatly cheered by their arrival, for Henri de Guise, in spite of his youth, owing to his father's reputation and his own deserts, was already highly

thought of. At once all possible preparations of defence were made, bridges were cut, walls repaired, bastions strengthened, swords sharpened and a double line of trenches dug within the eastern wall in the plain on the hill side of the vineyards. Even the priests took part; harquebuses and morions were served out to the canons of Saint-Hilaire and of the Cathedral, and they did sentry duty, sword on thigh.

The investment of the city took place on July 25 (1569). The Admiral made his headquarters at Saint-Benoît a few miles to the south, and had his cannon in place by August 1. He then began a steady cannonade, first at one part of the walls, then at another, trying to find a weak spot. Finally a breach was made on the east side, by the river Clain, and the besiegers, thinking they could enter if they were once across the river, set to work to construct a bridge, confident of victory. There was great alarm in the town. At a council of war, many officers were of opinion that the two Princes, Guise and Mayenne, young men of such great importance, should not be exposed to capture by their mortal enemies, and ought to be smuggled out of the town; others, among them the Commandant, held that the presence of the Duc de Guise would remind the garrison of his father's defense of Metz, and encourage them mightily, whereas if he left, everybody would be depressed and not a man fight with the same vigor. The Duke, hearing of the debate, speedily decided it; he was going to stay; not to save his life would he falsify the good opinion that nobles and commons had of him, or let any man say that he cared more for his life than for the honor of his father, of his house and himself. Inwardly he rejoiced to be fighting the man whom he regarded as his father's murderer. He took command of the soldiers who had been stationed at the trenches to repel the enemy after they had entered by the breach. They awaited the attack, arms in hand; however, Coligny suspected that the bridge to cross the Clain was not strong enough, and postponed the assault. That night some Italian divers among the garrison dived into the river and cut the cables that held the

bridge; and danger from that quarter was for the time removed.

Again the cannonade was heavy and new breaches made. The garrison, fearing that Coligny's bridge might now be ready for a renewed attack, succeeded in damming the river and flooding the low ground on the east of the town. The water was too deep for the assailants to ford it, so they were again delayed until they could build portable bridges. That night Guise joined the sappers, handled a shovel, carried a hod, and urged every man to redouble his efforts, and they succeeded in repairing the breaches and preventing another attack there. The besiegers then tried to break the dam, but sallies from the city, in which the Guises were prominent, blocked every attempt. The attack then shifted to the north end of the town, the faubourg of Rochereuil; the Huguenots captured a tower, from which their musketeers commanded the lower town. To meet this danger the garrison built covered passages to enable the soldiers to reach the trenches in safety.

The hard pressed city was now cheered by news that the Duc d'Anjou was raising an army to go to its rescue. However, it was apparent that Coligny was determined to make a further effort to carry the defenses before Anjou's army should have time to come up. The attack came from the advantageous position of the captured tower at Rochereuil, but the garrison beat them back; d'Aubigné says that a large troop of ladies on horseback, with plumes in their bonnets, rode out from the upper town to watch and encourage their gallant defenders. Still there was danger from further assaults, and the Duc de Guise and the Comte de Lude placed all the ladies in the castle, so that in case the breaches were carried they might escape the first fury of the victorious enemy.

But, meanwhile, an enemy within the walls began to threaten to be as dangerous as the Huguenot army without. The food supply gave out, famine stared them in the face, and everything depended on the speed with which Anjou could bring succour. The flour mills had been shot to pieces; the horses were fed on grape leaves,

for their oats were needed for the soldiers, and many were killed for food; but horses so long as possible had to be spared, and when fresh straw gave out they were given the straw in mattresses, and then straw mattings from the houses of the rich. The citizens buckled in their belts. They expelled all useless mouths, old men, women and children, from the city, but the besiegers would not let them pass, and the Duke allowed them to come back. Every green plant was eaten, and rats and mice. All these details are uncertain, for legend very soon cast its golden mists over the story.

At last relief came; the Duc d'Anjou had gathered together his army, and had attacked the Huguenot town of Châtellerault, and Coligny, hearing that a breach had been made in its walls, withdrew his army from Poitiers to go to the rescue (September 7). The siege had lasted seven weeks. Young Guise won golden repute. La Noue, the Huguenot captain, says that many people thought the defense of Poitiers as great a feat as that of Metz by his father. The citizens overflowed with gratitude, and he, in return, praised their courage and steadfastness, assured them of his friendship and promised his protection. It must have been pleasant to him to have repulsed Coligny. The day after the siege was raised, devout religious services were held; in a great procession through the streets to the church of Saint-Hilaire, the Duke and three others, barehead, carried a canopy over the host. Then the preacher in his sermon, in spite of the fact that Guise had particularly asked him not to mention his name, gave to the Duke, after God and His saints, all the honor of the city's deliverance, and expatiated on how his great father's virtues had descended to the son. The Duke was exceedingly vexed, but the preacher said he could not help it.

That same day the Duke left the city, bidding the Commandant have an eye on the Huguenots in the city to see that they did no harm, and, if they behaved properly (*modestement*), not to disturb them. He then went to Tours to see the King, who greeted

him warmly and rewarded him by admitting him a member of his inner Council. Poets, populace, and the Queen Mother praised him. At nineteen, Henri de Guise had outstripped his grandfather and his father at the same age.

He then joined Anjou's army, and took part at the battle of Moncontour, halfway between Saumur and Poitiers, where the Admiral was completely defeated (October 3, 1569). If the victors had understood the military wisdom of destroying the remnant of the mobile army and capturing Coligny, they might have ended the war, and put down the Huguenot rebels once for all. But they stopped to lay siege to Saint-Jean-d'Angely, an unimportant town, and Coligny, whose spirit never showed its brilliant qualities till in defeat, taking young Henry of Navarre, slipped southward where the Huguenots were in power and made a famous retreat, past Toulouse, Carcassonne, Montpellier, and up northward again as far as Charité-sur-Loire, a little town visited by tourists on account of the remains of a glorious Romanesque abbey. It was now the beginning of the summer of 1570, and various circumstances turned to the advantage of the Huguenots. Most of all, the country needed peace, for it was in a wretched condition. An Englishman wrote:

"The face of ffraunce is lamentable at this season, the meaner sub-  
jects spoiled everywhere, and the greater neither sure of life nor  
lyvinge in any place, whereby murther is no cruetie, nor dis-  
obedience any offence, bathing one in another's blood, makinge it  
custome to dispise religion and justice, or any more sacred bond,  
either of devyne or humayne constitution. Where the victorer  
maybe bewaile his victorie, and the naturall lastlie in dainger to be  
over rune by the stranger whome he provides nowe for his defence.  
Havinge consumed the store of the laste yere and wastinge that on  
the ground which should serve for the yere to come, so as a present  
desperacion and a piteous mournynge doth invade every sorte, as  
though their calamities shold have none end, but with the ende of

their lives togeather. And that withall the dreadfulest cruelties at once of the world, plague, honger, and the sword, which god of his goodnes cease in them, and preserve from us; and to this is joyned an incredible obstinacye of either side, even hardenyng their harts with malice and furye to th' utter extermynacion one of another."

(Quoted from A. W. Whitehead's *Gaspard de Coligny*.)

The Guises and their adherents were the main supporters of the war party. The Parlement de Paris, always devoted to them, set a reward of fifty thousand crowns on Coligny's head, dead or alive. But most people began to tire, and turned their thoughts to peace. There was much jealousy of the Guises, and the envious spoke harshly of the Cardinal of Lorraine. Besides, a neutral party was growing in number; some were shocked by the cruelties practised on the Huguenots, and advocated a treatment more like that enjoined by the Gospels; some were alienated by the close relations between the Guise faction and the King of Spain; others, like the Maréchal de Montmorency, were influenced by jealousy of the brilliant and successful Guises; and there were, also, as the Huguenot La Noue says, *les mécontents de toutes les opinions*. This party was called *les Politiques*, and it threw its influence for peace. But perhaps the strongest argument was a victory won by Coligny at Arnay-le-Duc, which made Catherine fear that the Huguenots might march on Paris.

A personal incident also, it is said, turned the royal family against the Guises. Henri had flirted with a young widow, Catherine of Clèves, who had been brought up in his grandmother's castle at Joinville. This lady, still a girl, had married the Prince de Porcien, but he had not lived long, and young Guise, handsome, athletic, crowned with laurels, was a very attractive man. But his thoughts were set on ambition, and his scheming uncles, the Cardinals of Lorraine and Guise, proposed that he should lift his eyes higher and woo Margot, the King's sister. This young lady was gay, vivacious, handsome, well educated, and by no means

shy, and, forgetful of her childish criticism of him, she cast a kindly eye at the charming young man. It was true that there was a belief abroad that she was destined to Henry of Navarre, who was a king in his own right, but the Cardinals proposed instead to have Navarre marry a daughter of the Duke of Lorraine; and why should the King's sister not marry a Guise? A King of Scotland had married their aunt, and a King of France had married their niece. The Spanish ambassador wrote to King Philip, "There is nothing talked of in France now except the report of the marriage of Madame Marguerite to the Duc de Guise." The Cardinal of Lorraine was so eager for this match that he was ready to give a large sum of money to his nephew. It was then that Henri of Anjou revealed his perfidious nature. He was jealous of the brilliant Duke and did not propose to have him rise higher.

But I will give you Margot's version of the story; she tells it in this way. She went with her mother to join the Duc d'Anjou, who after the victory at Moncontour was besieging the town of Saint-Jean-d'Angely, and found her brother very much altered in his disposition towards her. He had come under the spell of M. de Guast, who was an attractive rascal and had taught the Prince various Machiavellian doctrines, to care for nobody but himself, and not to let anybody whatever, even brother or sister, share his good fortune. His mother told him how fond Margot was of him and how she had done all she could for him—to which he responded coldly, saying a person might be useful at one time, and harmful at another. His mother asked him why he said that.

He thought this a good opportunity to put into execution his purpose to do his sister harm. So he said that she was becoming very pretty, and that M. de Guise was making up to her, that the Duke's uncles wished him to marry her, and that she was falling in love with the Duke, and that it would be likely she would tell him whatever Anjou said to her. Her mother knew, he said, how ambitious the House of Guise was, how it had always tried to thwart the House of Valois, and he advised her not to speak any

more to Margot about public matters, and to withdraw from any intimacy with her. That very day her mother's manner to her changed. Margot asked the reason, and after much solicitation the story came out. Catherine said Anjou was intelligent, and was right, and bade Margot not to speak to the Duke in Anjou's presence. Margot represented her innocence: she had never heard of this matter, and if the Duke entertained such an idea and should speak to her of it, she would tell her mother immediately, but she could never forgive her brother for coming between her and her mother. At this Catherine lost her temper, and told Margot not to let her ill will to Anjou be seen—for Catherine idolized Anjou. Then it happened that, being sick, Margot went to Angers, and there she found M. de Guise and his uncles, and Anjou took advantage of their presence to play her a wicked trick. He brought Guise to her room, pretended to be fond of him, embraced him, and kept saying, "Would to goodness you were my brother!" M. de Guise pretended not to understand, but Margot was furious with him. Soon after this scene a marriage with the King of Portugal was brought on the carpet, but Anjou told his mother that Margot was averse to it. This Margot denied, and said she had no will but her mother's. Catherine, played on by Anjou's wiles, grew angry, said that that was not true, that she knew very well that the Cardinal of Lorraine had persuaded Margot to prefer his nephew. Margot adds that she had no peace whatever; on the one hand the King of Spain prevented the Portugese marriage, and on the other the presence of the Duc de Guise at Court always supplied a pretext for them to persecute her, although neither the Duke, nor any of his relations, had ever spoken to her of a marriage, and for over a year the Duke had been paying his addresses to the Princesse de Porcien.

Margot, it is feared, had no very great predilection for truth. Gossip embroiders variations on her story. Ambassadors nosed about, and picked up what surmises they could. It is said that Margot liked the Duke of Guise, and encouraged him underhand.

Though forbidden by etiquette to write directly to the Duke, she added a few lines of her own to a letter written to him by one of her ladies-in-waiting. This letter was intercepted. The Queen Mother was furious. She sent for the Cardinal de Lorraine and bade him deny absolutely any suggestion of such an engagement; and the Duc de Guise was forbidden to see Margot. The King—he, too, jealous of the House of Guise—went to his mother's room at five o'clock in the morning. They sent for Margot, scolded her and beat her. And at a royal ball, when Guise entered in his rich garments sparkling with jewels, which, Davila says, increased the nobleness of his aspect, the King met him at the door and asked him where he was going. “I am come to serve Your Majesty,” he said. The King replied drily that he had no need of the Duke's services. The Duc d'Anjou went further, and swore that if Guise lifted his eyes to Margot, he would murder him.

So, taking one thing with another, Catherine was quite ready to give the Huguenots good terms. The Edict of Saint-Germain (August 8, 1570) granted them “the broadest and most substantial privileges the Huguenots had yet received.” That autumn Henri de Guise married Catherine of Clèves, the Princess of Porcien, and was restored to the King's good graces.

## CHAPTER XXV

### APPROACH OF THE CATASTROPHE

THE Huguenots, though worsted again and again, had received better terms than before. And all the credit was due to one man. Admiral Coligny stood out as the foremost man in France. A Venetian wrote:

“No one in these wars has been more talked about, or made his influence more felt, than the Admiral. And the astonishing thing is that, whereas he did nothing worthy of praise when serving the King in the wars against Spain, in these wars against him he has won a very great reputation and made himself much feared. It is astonishing, too, that he, a private gentleman, of little means, has sustained so long and hard a struggle, not only against the whole might of his own sovereign, but also against all the help the latter has had from Spain, from many princes in Italy and some in Germany. And the wonder grows when we remember that though he has lost many battles, he has preserved his reputation through it all.” (Quoted by Whitehead, p. 232.)

It was character, a mixture of courage, simplicity, steadfastness, *sang-froid*, forethought and a canny quality, that enabled him to triumph in this fashion. He had no real military talents, he had been beaten at Dreux, at Saint-Denis, at Jarnac, at Poitiers, at Moncontour, and yet his resolute refusal to throw up the sponge, even in most dismal circumstances, had forced the Catholics to concede more liberal terms than at any time before. He had achieved a great moral victory. He hated civil war; and now that peace had

been made, his thoughts were concentrated on how he could preserve the Protestant religion in France and avoid any further fighting of Frenchmen against Frenchmen. The political situation offered him a plan.

Spain was the greatest power in Europe, and Philip II, a slow, deliberate, conscientious man who believed with all his heart in autocracy and in the orthodox creed, was dedicating himself to the maintenance of his principles. He had been very wroth with the Protestants in the Netherlands, and had punished them as heretics and rebels. He had cut off the heads of Egmont and Horn, and hoped still to cut off that of William of Orange. The Duke of Alva, an accomplished soldier, who fully shared his master's views, had crushed the rebellion with what seemed to Protestants great cruelty. Nevertheless, thousands and thousands of people in the Netherlands were living in the hope of another uprising, and William of Orange was busily seeking allies. He and Coligny thought alike. Their plan was to persuade France (for King, and Catholics generally, resented King Philip's bullying attitude) to unite with England, with the Protestant princes of Germany, and the Grand Duke of Tuscany, and drive the Spaniards out of the Netherlands. Coligny believed that war against Spain would excite such patriotic fervor in France that Huguenot and Catholic, forgetting their mutual animosities, would fight side by side, and learn to live in peace, each following his conscience in religious matters. The Prince of Orange's brother, Louis of Nassau, was also on fire with the plan. He was confident that the people of the Netherlands would rise as soon as help was in sight; and Coligny was equally sure that he could raise an army of French Huguenots, eager to fight on behalf of their fellow Protestants. So sure he was, so full of hope, that he asked permission to put his head in the lion's den, to go to Court.

This act was perhaps not so rash as it seems to us, as we look back on Saint Bartholomew's day. Charles IX was mightily indignant at the Spanish King's frequently repeated assumptions of

superiority—for instance, Philip had pushed Charles aside and married the elder of the Austrian Archduchesses, leaving the younger, Elizabeth, for Charles, and would not allow the French betrothal to be signed until a quarter of an hour after his own—and he lent a ready ear to Prince Louis's appeals, only he was afraid of his mother. Catherine, on her part, cared for three things: to benefit the Duc d'Anjou, “the light of her eyes,” to keep herself in power and to marry her children well. She was trying to marry Anjou to Queen Elizabeth of England, and a friendly attitude towards the Protestant rebels in the Netherlands would certainly help that plan; but, on the other hand, she was afraid of the power of King Philip and dared not anger him. And she disliked and distrusted Coligny. She never forgot her fright when the Huguenots tried to kidnap the King and herself at Meaux, and she did not wish him to acquire an influence over the impressionable King. However, she consented to an interview, and the Admiral went to the Château of Blois, to the Queen's room, where the royal family awaited him (September 15, 1571).

The accounts of the interview differ somewhat. One says that both the King, at this time twenty-two, and the Admiral, turned pale, that the Queen Mother received him graciously but that when he advanced to kiss the young Queen's hand she flushed, drew back and would not permit him. De Thou says that Coligny knelt to the King, who lifted him up, calling him “*Mon père*,” said that to have peace solidly confirmed by the Admiral's return to Court made this the happiest day of his life, and added with a smile, “Now, at last, we have you, and shall keep you, and you will not depart from us any more.” Whatever the truth may be, there were those who suspected that the Queen Mother had invited the Admiral to Blois in order to kill him. The Florentine envoy wrote (November 28, 1571), “The Pope believes that the Peace of Saint-Germain was made, and the Admiral invited to Blois, with the secret intention of killing him.” And Philip II said concerning the invitation (September, 1571), “That can only

be with the purpose of getting rid of that abominable man, and it will be a most honorable and meritorious act."

After the embarrassment of the first meeting was over, the King and the Admiral saw one another frequently, became friendly and intimate, and the past seemed to be wholly forgotten. The King appeared to be won over to the anti-Spanish plan, though he still did not dare tell his mother; and the Admiral was very happy over the prospects. Events, at first, confirmed his hopes. A fleet of patriotic Dutch pirates swooped down on Brielle, a town on the coast of Holland, and hoisted the Prince of Orange's flag. Neighbor towns followed this example (April, 1572); Louis of Nassau seized Valenciennes and Mons. Coligny was delighted; he met Brantôme at Saint-Cloud and said, "God be praised, we shall soon chase the Spaniards from the Netherlands and make our King the master there, or we shall die, and I the first; and I shall not complain to lose my life in so good a cause."

So matters stood at the beginning of the summer, at the time when the Huguenot world was making ready to go to Paris—for Henry of Navarre was to marry the King's youngest sister, Margot, and there was to be a grand wedding, and Huguenot and Catholic were to shake hands and kiss, the chasm would close, France be united, all would be merry as wedding bells, and brotherly love continue triumphant. On June 9 Queen Jeanne died. There were dark whispers as to what caused her death, but they were ignored, and preparations for the festivities went on apace.

Coligny, obsessed by the idea that the main road, if not the only road, to religious reconciliation was a national union against Spain, pressed the Council to declare war, and he succeeded so far as to persuade the King to permit a levy of five thousand men among the Huguenots. The levy was made, and off the five thousand went to assist the Flemish rebels. The general, Genlis, perhaps was imprudent; the men were undisciplined, and plundered as they went; at all events, they were completely routed by the Spaniards, and those who escaped were killed by the peasants of

the countryside. Nevertheless Coligny, always more resolute after defeat, pressed for open war, and offered to raise an army of twenty thousand Huguenots, and for a time it seemed likely that he would persuade the King. But the allies, whom Prince Louis of Nassau had too hopefully reckoned on, faded away; England did not propose to let the King of France, Protestantism or no Protestantism, become master of Flanders; the German Lutheran princes grew cool, the Turks refused to bind themselves, the Grand Duke of Tuscany was lending money at a high rate to the Duke of Alva, the Pope and the Seigniory of Venice counselled peace. But more potent was the opposition of the Queen Mother; she was frightened by the power of King Philip, triumphant at Lepanto, and threw her whole heart into preventing war. The King dared not assert his will against hers. Under her influence, and that of the Catholic leaders, the Council gave a definite decision against undertaking hostilities against Spain. Coligny said to the King, "Your Majesty will not take it ill, if, having promised the Prince of Orange to help him, I attempt to keep that promise," and, to the Queen Mother, "Madam, the King refuses to enter upon this war; please God that another does not come to him that he will not be able to refuse." And then, even after the King's denial, he decided to go ahead and prepared to raise twelve thousand harquebusiers and three thousand horse (August 11).

It was no light matter. Such a course would certainly lead to war with Spain, and Catherine was convinced that Coligny would bring the King, herself and her darling, the Duke of Anjou, to ruin. Coligny was the embodiment of danger, and Catherine's mind must have harked back to King Philip's riddance of Egmont and Horn.

Meantime the marriage of Henry of Navarre and Margot was drawing near, "a wonderful contrivance to strengthen the peace," De Thou says, "or the better to conceal the evil designs that were contemplated." He thought it possible that those evil designs were

afoot at the time of the Peace of Saint-Germain. At any rate the surface was quiet.

The Guises, who had withdrawn to their country-places on the King's recalling Coligny to court, professed to accept the King's acquittal of Coligny of all guilt in the assassination of Duke François, and came up to the wedding, but their hearts were not changed. There is nothing to show that Henry of Guise had any definite notion of revenge; he did not, however, entertain a doubt but that Coligny was guilty of his father's death, and he was equally convinced that it was morally obligatory upon him to take revenge, that it was a point of honor. A vendetta is a vendetta, and the Commandment "Thou shalt not kill" no more occurred to his mind as an obstacle to action than it does to a general in battle. Hamlet, that delicate-minded prince, felt a similar obligation and obeyed the voice of duty. You remember the vendetta in Marimée's *Colomba*, and that in *Huckleberry Finn*. The notion lies deep in ill-organized societies; the family of the murdered man must take revenge. Orestes knew it, and Henry of Guise was not the man to stain his honor by neglect or forgetfulness. Assassination was common enough among gentlemen. Only a short time before, Charry, a maître-de-camp, had been murdered on the Pont Saint-Michel by one of Andelot's officers; Lignerolles, a favorite of the Duc d'Anjou, had been murdered by the Vicomte de la Guerche, at the instigation, it was believed, of the King. The Sieur de Maurevert had murdered M. de Mouy, a lieutenant to Coligny, and the King had rewarded him, as he himself tells in a letter to the Duc d'Anjou:

"Plessis les Tours, October 10, 1569.

"Dear Brother,

"In return for the signal service done me by Charles de Louvier, Seigneur de Maurevert, the bearer of this (the man who killed Mouy in the way he will tell you), I beg you to give him from me

the collar of my Order [St. Michel], as he has been elected an associate by the members of that Order. And please see that the citizens of *ma bonne ville de Paris* gratify him with some nice present according to his deserts. I pray God, dear Brother, to have you in His holy keeping.

“Your dear brother,

“CHARLES.”

When Henry de Guise had had the hardihood to make love to Margot, it was said that the King suborned his illegitimate brother, Henry of Angoulême, to murder him, and that Guise was only saved by transferring his attentions to Catherine of Clèves. When Jeanne d’Albret died, rumour said she had been poisoned by means of a pair of gloves. Private murder was by no means the disreputable act that it is now. The ambassador of Savoy reported that there had been fourteen unpunished murders in three months. These figures are small compared to our modern American customs, but they concerned high society.

All that we know of Henri de Guise’s thoughts is his expressed wish that he be left alone in a room with the Admiral to settle their differences without the King’s interference. Coligny, a man over fifty, probably regarded him as a boy and not dangerous, for, with the exception of the defence of Poitiers, his career—he was still but twenty-two—had shown little but headlong valor. The Spanish ambassador reported that his courage was greater than his intelligence. The Admiral and the Duke used to meet in the palace of the Louvre, but they did not speak to one another. The King dropped remarks that, in the light of future events, were harshly interpreted; he told Guise he would not force him to greater friendship with Coligny than he wished, and bade d’Aumale be patient, for some day he would see good sport. At all events, Coligny now faced a more dangerous enemy than Henri de Guise; he confronted the Queen Mother.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### THE WEDDING

THE royal wedding was set for August 18, a Monday. The King wrote Coligny to be sure to come, and he directed the *Prévôt des Marchands* to take measures that there should be no disturbance at his coming. He also published an ordinance that all persons, of what rank soever, were forbidden under pain of death to rake up the past, or give occasion to new quarrels, or carry firearms, or fight, or draw sword, especially in the neighborhood of the King, or in the city of Paris, or its faubourgs. Nevertheless, ordinances are but ordinances, and Coligny's friends were full of concern as to his going to Paris. At Châtillon, as he was about to mount his horse, a peasant woman, one of his cottagers, threw herself at his feet and clasped his knees, with tears and lamentations (Pierre de L'Étoile had the story from a man who saw it), and cried out: "O Sir, my good master, why are you going to your destruction? If you go to Paris I shall never see you again, for you will die and all who go with you. If you have no pity on us, at least have pity on your wife and your children, and on all those people who will perish there on your account." The Admiral put her aside; but she then flung herself at his wife's knees, begging her to prevent her husband from going, for she was sure that if he went he would not return, and that would be the cause of the death of ten thousand men.

And one of the letters to the Admiral said:

"Remember the maxim which the Papists accept as a religious dogma, a maxim confirmed by the authority of Catholic councils,

*No faith need be kept with heretics*, and they regard Protestants as heretics. Remember, too, that the hatred they bear to Protestants is eternal, on account of the harm done to the country by these late wars. There is no doubt but that the Queen's purpose is to exterminate all Protestants at whatever cost. Remember that she is a foreigner, an Italian, of a papal family (and that the Protestants are at war with the Papacy), and, more than that, she is a Tuscan, and by nature deceitful, and will not fail to proceed to all extremities against her enemies. Consider the school in which the King was educated, and what he has learned from his fine tutor—to curse, to forswear himself, to blaspheme against the name of God, to corrupt matrons and maids, to dissemble his path, his religion, his purposes, to wear a mask over his face. Those are the lessons he has been taught to regard as a pastime. And his tutors made it his childish sport to see animals have their throats cut, and be butchered, in order to accustom him to the sight of the blood of his people. A true disciple of Macchiavelli, his master, he is determined to permit no other religion in his realm but his own, under the belief that there will never be any peace if two religions are allowed. . . . Everybody knows the interview between the King and his mother at Blois, how among other things the King, swearing by God's name according to his wont, asked her merrily if he had not played his rôle well on the arrival of the Queen of Navarre. 'You have begun very well,' the Queen answered, 'but that will do no good unless you go on.' 'I'll take them all in my net,' he replied, swearing several times, 'and I will hand them over to you.' It is on this conversation, which you know to be true, that you must base your conduct; if you are sensible, you must get out of Paris as quickly as possible, and away from the Court, which is nothing but a——."

Nevertheless, Coligny said he was resolved to be faithful to the King, and that he had rather be dragged through the streets of Paris than engage again in a civil war; that there was no ground

for such suspicions, and he could not believe that one of the best Kings that France had had for several centuries would be capable of such horrible perfidy.

So Coligny went, and the royal wedding was celebrated, on a scaffold built in front of Notre-Dame, with great pomp—*solemnitez exquises*. The King of Navarre was attended by his Bourbon cousins, the Princes of Condé and Conti, by the Comte de la Rochefoucauld, and by many Huguenot lords from all over the Kingdom. After that rite the procession went into Notre-Dame, but before Mass the Huguenots left the Cathedral and stayed outside until it was finished. They then returned, the bridegroom kissed his bride in presence of the King, and the royal company proceeded to the Archbishop's palace for the banquet. De Thou says he remembers how, after Mass, he was taken through the gallery of the Cathedral into the choir, and put next to Coligny, and that he fixed his eyes on him with great curiosity and interest. Coligny was pointing out to the Maréchal Damville (son to old Montmorency) the flags taken from the Huguenots at Jarnac and Moncontour hung up on the walls, and De Thou heard him say, "In a little while those will be torn down, and others, pleasanter to see, put in their place." He referred to the expected war with Spain, which he understood was resolved upon.

But destiny had decreed otherwise. The Queen Mother, the Duchesse de Nemours (formerly the wife of François de Guise), the Duc d'Anjou, the Comte de Retz, one of the Queen's Italian counsellors, and Birague, also an Italian, the Chancellor, had put their heads together, and hatched a plot: Coligny must die, he is too dangerous to live, let him be killed by an agent of the Guises; then the Protestants and the Montmorency party, owing to their kinship with the Châtillons, will attack the Guisards; the consequence will be the destruction of the leaders, and then the King's soldiers will intervene and put the survivors to death for sedition—a good plot, an excellent plot—and thereafter the Queen Mother would rule the Kingdom undisturbed, and be able to establish

her *chers yeux*, her darling Anjou, as King of some country somewhere. It was, of course, of prime importance that the murder of Coligny should be ascribed at once to the Guises.

Many people, in the light of later events, believed that the plot had been contrived long before. Pierre de l'Étoile recounts more fully the conversation between the Queen Mother and the King at Blois, referred to in the warning letter addressed to Coligny. He says that when Jeanne d'Albret was lured to Blois, the King called her his dear great-aunt, his best-beloved, his all, and never left her side, talking to her always with the greatest respect, and that when he went to bed he said to his mother, "Well, Madam, what do you think? Did I play my rôle well?" "Yes," she answered, "very well: but that is nothing, unless you keep it up." "Let me alone," the King said, "and you will see that I shall take them all in my net." There is confusion surrounding this story. The Queen Mother met Jeanne at Chenonceaux about March, 1572; and the King's conduct is sometimes assigned to his first interview with Coligny. No; such stories are not to be trusted. The King was not cognizant of the plot; neither does it appear that Henri de Guise was involved in it. The Queen Mother was the instigator, and of the Guises only the Duchesse de Nemours, it seems, was among the plotters. The details of execution were for a time left to the favor of circumstance. A propitious moment was sure to come.

After the wedding most elaborate festivities succeeded one another. That same day there was a great supper at the Louvre, and a ball. The next day, Tuesday, the Duc d'Anjou gave a dinner. On Wednesday there was a sort of allegorical tournament held at the Hôtel de Bourbon, just behind the Louvre, in which King Charles, his brothers, and Henry of Navarre and his friends took part. The revel was this. A place, representing Paradise, was defended by the King, Anjou and Alençon, and attacked by Navarre and his companions; the latter were repulsed and put into Tartarus. The allegory was puzzling, it seemed odd to put the bridegroom, the hero of the fête, in Tartarus, and some thought it



*(Photograph by Giraudon)*

Marguerite de Valois ("Margot")



insulting to Protestants, and fancied (at least afterwards) that they perceived the presage of tragedy. On Thursday another allegorical combat was fought, and again with Catholics, the King, his brothers, the Duc d'Aumale and the Duc de Guise, on one side, against Navarre and Protestants on the other. But all was in good humour, and done for the pleasure of the spectators; and yet though the outside was friendly there was tension underneath.

At this point (according to De Thou) the King did what must expose him to the suspicion of playing the Huguenots false, but it may have been merely a precaution on his part against them, for he had not forgotten their attempt to kidnap him at Meaux. He went to Coligny, with demonstrations of most sincere friendship, and said: "You know, mon père, that you promised to avoid any slight to the Guises so long as you stayed at Court; and on their part they promised to show you, and your suite, all the great consideration that you deserve. I trust your word; but I do not trust theirs so completely. I know their bold and haughty character; they are only waiting for an opportunity to take revenge. The people of Paris are devoted to them, and they have, under pretext of doing honor to my sister's wedding, brought with them a large band of well-armed soldiers. I should be in despair if they understood any enterprise against you. Such an injury would come directly back upon us. That being so, if you agree, I think it expedient to bring my regiment of guards into the city under such-and-such officers [he named only those of whom Coligny felt no suspicion]. This reinforcement will assure the public peace. If any factious persons make trouble, there will be men to oppose them." To this proposal the Admiral readily agreed.

At that time the eastern side of the Louvre opened on the Rue d'Autriche. Across this street, which ran at right angles with the Seine, stood the Hôtel de Bourbon and the Hôtel d'Anjou. Beyond them, and parallel with the Rue d'Autriche, came the Rue des Poulies, out of which, bending towards the northeast, issued the Rue des Fossés-Saint-Germain. This last street then crossed a third

street, the Rue de l'Arbre-Sec, which was parallel to the first two. The Admiral lodged in a house at the corner of the Rue des Fossés-Saint-Germain and of the Rue de l'Anbre-Sec; so that on his way to and from the Louvre he would surely follow the Rue des Fossés-Saint-Germain. At the place where this street starts from the Rue des Poulies, on the east side, with its back to the cloister of Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois, there stood a house, in the row bordering the street, in which one Pierre de Piles de Villemur lodged. This Villemur had once been a preceptor of Henri de Guise. At this time he happened to be away, and only an old servant woman was in charge of the house. Here a soldier, accompanied by a lackey, was brought by the Seigneur de Chailly, a bailiff of the Duc de Guise, who told the servant that the soldier was a close friend of M. Villemur and to take good care of him. She gave him Villemur's bedchamber to sleep in. This soldier, so introduced into the house, was none other than Maurevert, who had murdered M. de Mouy and had received an ecclesiastical benefice from the King and the Order of Saint-Michel for so doing, and in addition was known as *le tuer du Roi*, the King's Murderer.

The next day, Friday, there was a meeting of the King's Council at the Louvre, which ended before noon, at ten or eleven o'clock, and Coligny started to go home to his lodgings on the Rue des Fossés-Saint Germain, as I have said, a little beyond Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois. On his way he met King Charles, who had been attending service in a chapel across the street, the Rue d'Autriche, and turned back with him to the tennis court, to watch him play with Henri de Guise and M. de Téligny, the Admiral's son-in-law, and a third. The palace of the Louvre was very different from what it is now; it was still a mediaeval fortress, square, with round towers at the corners, the only new part being the west end built by Pierre Lescot in the reign of Henry II. The tennis courts lay at the east end of the enclosure and opened on the Rue d'Autriche. The Admiral watched the game for a time, and then walked out into the street, turned to the right till he came to the street border-

ing the Seine, then easterly to the Rue des Poulies, and then, accompanied by a dozen gentlemen, he sauntered up the street, till he came opposite the house of Villemur, when a shot rang out from the ground floor. The Admiral was walking slowly, reading a memorial, and happened to pause, perhaps to make his shoe sit more easily, and the bullets missed his chest, but hit a finger of his right hand and his left arm. At the wound he cried out, "This is how honest folk are treated in France!" and, pointing, added, "The shot came from that window where the smoke is." Some of his suite rushed to the house, and found a harquebus on the bed of the front room, the wick still smoking. The weapon was recognized to be of the model used by the bodyguard of the Duc d'Anjou. The assassin had escaped. He had arranged with M. de Chailly to have horses ready, and after firing he rushed out the back door into the grounds of Saint Germain-l'Auxerrois, mounted, rode through the town to the gate of Saint-Antoine, where he found a fresh horse waiting, and escaped. Meanwhile the Admiral, supported on each side, was able to walk to his lodgings, and one messenger was despatched to carry the news to the King and another to Dr. Ambroise Paré.

The King was still at the tennis court when the messenger arrived. All the witnesses agreed that his anger and indignation appeared perfectly genuine. "Shall I never have peace?" he cried, "—always fresh troubles!" and threw his racket to the ground and went into the palace. Guise left the tennis court by another way, and Téligny hurried to his father-in-law. The King bade the old servant in Villemur's house, and Maurevert's lackey, who were both arrested, to be brought before him and examined. Again his anger broke out, and he denounced the deed in a most natural-seeming fashion. He swore that he would so deal with the guilty and their accomplices as to satisfy the Admiral's friends, and at once appointed three members of the Parlement to investigate, one of them the President Christophe de Thou, father of the historian.

The Queen Mother had just sat down to table when they told

her what had happened. She got up without speaking and went to her room. "I think," wrote the Spanish ambassador, "that she was expecting this." She then went to the King, and found Henry of Navarre and his young cousin Condé, who were asking permission to leave Paris, and added her protestations of indignation. "It's a great outrage done the King," she said. "If we leave this today, tomorrow they will be so bold as to do the same to my son in the Louvre." Then she and the King went to visit the wounded man. When they showed her the bullet extracted from his arm, she said: "I am glad that the ball did not stay in the wound; for I remember that when M. de Guise was killed at Orléans, the doctors told me that if the ball could be taken out, even if it had been poisoned, there would be no danger of death."

After the proper amount of interest and sympathy, the Queen Mother and the King took their leave, and the Huguenots gathered together in Coligny's lodgings and put their heads together. The Vidame de Chartres declared to Navarre and Condé his opinion that the attack upon the Admiral was but the first act of a tragedy which would finish with the murder of all their friends. Téligny advised immediate departure from the city; but the physicians thought it would not be safe to move the Admiral, and at that Téligny decided to stay and urged them all to have complete confidence in the King. At first they all deemed it the Guises' doing, but soon they began to suspect that the Guises were only accomplices. And the next day, Saturday, La Rochefoucauld, Téligny, de Piles, and other Huguenot lords went to the Louvre and spoke out roundly to the King and Queen; they said in the most defiant terms that if justice was not done within twenty-four hours they possessed the means to do it themselves, that "though the Admiral had lost one arm, a thousand others would be lifted up and make such a massacre that all the rivers of France would run with blood." And they were on the brink of rushing to the Hôtel de Guise and murdering the Duke there, or wherever he could be found.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S DAY

ON THAT same Saturday Coligny, having heard that sixty thousand Parisians had begun to mutiny and take arms, asked the King to send some troops to guard his house; to which request the King and the Duc d'Anjou very graciously assented, and ordered Cosseins, Colonel of the King's French guards, to take some of his soldiers and stand at Coligny's door; and a few, a very few, of Navarre's Swiss guards were sent with the others. For still greater safety the King ordered the Protestant gentlemen who were in Paris to take lodgings near the Admiral's, and quartermasters were bidden assign them houses in that section of the city, and everybody could hear the King say not to allow any Catholic to go near this region. The city authorities were commanded to make the rounds, and take a list of all Protestants and tell them that the King wished them to lodge near the Admiral. De Thou says he cannot understand why these measures did not excite suspicion. The probable answer is, not only that the Admiral and others could not believe that the King was capable of treachery, but also that at that time the King had no treachery in his mind.

Fear, as usual, sowed dragons' teeth. The threats of the Huguenots had thoroughly frightened the Queen Mother. If they traced the Admiral's assassination to her, what might not happen both to her and to her darling Anjou, as guiltily involved as she? She must see it through; the Huguenots must be exterminated. She held a meeting of her most trusted counsellors; besides herself and Anjou there were her husband's illegitimate son, Henry of Angoulême, Maréchal Tavannes, and her Italian followers, Gondi, Comte de Retz, René de Birague, the Chancellor, a Milanese, and

the Duc de Nevers, a Gonzaga. All agreed that as the attempt on the Admiral's life had failed there must be a general extermination of the Huguenots; nothing else could save the King and the Kingdom and themselves from ruin. Coligny would be like a lion escaped from his cage. Since the Lord, in His inscrutable wisdom, had not granted success to the modest plan of killing only one man, why then a more radical plan must be adopted.

The Duc d'Aumale, the Duc de Guise and Henry of Angoulême were called to the Louvre to confer. Details were thought out. Some must lead the soldiers, others must rouse the populace. There was much discussion as to the fate of Henry of Navarre and Condé, but finally it was agreed that both should be spared, Navarre as a King and *Prince du Sang* and brother-in-law to King Charles, and Condé as a *Prince du Sang* and Nevers's brother-in-law. Montmorency and Damville, sons of the old Constable, were also put on the exempt list. There the exemptions stopped; Té ligny, La Rochefoucauld and La Noue were doomed. But the most important preliminary was still to be achieved; the King must be told and his approval obtained. This was to be done by Catherine and Anjou. The two went and told him that the responsibility for the attack on the Admiral did not lie with the Guises but that they, his mother and his brother, had contrived the deed, and now only one course was open to them. At first they had great difficulty. The Venetian Cavalli said that they argued for an hour and a half, and at last persuaded him that the Huguenots were about to take up arms that very night, and that his life and their lives and the safety of the Kingdom were at stake. The poor King had not dissembled about Coligny, he was very indignant with the attack upon him, but he could not stand up against his mother. As Margot said, he was *très catholique, très obéissant à sa mère*. He agreed, but he told Navarre that it would be well for him to bring all his trusty followers to the Louvre that night, in case the insolence and impetuosity of the Guises should work upon the populace to do evil. Henry of Navarre gratefully followed this advice.

Meanwhile there was great stir in the streets, armed men kept coming and going. Muttered threats were reported to Coligny, and he sent word of it to the King, who answered: "Let the Admiral be easy; nothing is done except by my orders; it's a matter of calming the populace whom the Guises wish to stir up." The Duc de Guise had his work assigned to him; he was appointed, so De Thou says, executive head of the massacre. De Thou was bitter against the League, and here he exaggerates the rôle of the Duc de Guise. It becomes clear from the accounts that the definite task assigned to the Duke was to see that the murder of Coligny was carried out. He called (De Thou continues) the Catholic officers together, announced to them His Majesty's orders, and said: "The time has come to punish this rebel, hated of God and men, and to exterminate all his partisans. The beast is in the toils; let us not let him escape. Make the most of this splendid opportunity to overthrow the enemies of the Kingdom. The glory of victory won in past wars, which has cost the King's loyal subjects so much blood, is nothing in comparison to what you will achieve today." He stationed soldiers around the Louvre, with orders to let none of the suite of Navarre or Condé issue forth. Colonel Cosseins, who guarded Coligny's house, also had orders to let no man out.

The *Prévôt des Marchands* was summoned, and bidden to tell the officers of the City train bands to arm their men and repair at midnight to the *Hôtel de Ville*, and there learn what they had to do. The former *Prévôt*, Marcel, a man of great influence in Paris, was also summoned. He was asked how many men he could muster, if the King had need of them. "That," he said, "would depend on how soon they were wanted." They said, in a month. He answered: "More than a hundred thousand." And in a week? "Proportionally." And in a day? "Twenty thousand." Marcel was sworn to secrecy, and then given his orders. He was to tell the train bands that the King intended to exterminate Coligny and all his adherents; they must see that none escaped, that none hid in

houses; the signal would be the tocsin from the bell of the Palais de Justice, and, in order to recognize one another, every man was to wear a white scarf on his left arm, and a white cross on his hat; all must come well armed and resolute, and torches should be put in all the windows to light the streets. Everything was arranged. The Duc de Guise, with his uncle, the Duc d'Aumale, and the King's illegitimate brother, Henri d'Angoulême, were to kill the Admiral and Téligny; Tavannes and the Duc de Nevers were to kill La Rochefoucauld. The Venetian ambassador wrote to the Doge, "Your Serenity can imagine with what satisfaction M. de Guise received this commission."

In the palace Margot, a bride of five days, was sitting in her mother's room, on a chest beside her elder sister Claude, the Duchess of Lorraine; the Duchess was in very low spirits. The Queen, who had been talking to some ladies, noticed Margot, came over, and bade her go to bed. Margot got up to obey, but her sister caught her by the arm, and cried out, "Don't go, Margot, for God's sake," and burst into tears. The Queen bade the Duchess of Lorraine hold her tongue. The Duchess pleaded that no advantage would come from sacrificing Margot, and said that if "they" discovered anything, "they" would take revenge on her. The Queen answered that, if it pleased God, no harm would come to her, but come what might she must go to her room for fear lest something be suspected and the matter interfered with. What this meant Margot did not understand, and the Queen, a second time, rudely bade her go to bed. Claude again burst into tears, and murmured "Good night," but did not dare say more. Margot went up to her boudoir, said her prayers, and, going into her bed-chamber, found her husband in bed, and thirty or more Huguenot gentlemen crowding about him. Her husband told her to get into bed. So she did, but she could not sleep. They all talked of the attack upon the Admiral and how they would demand justice in the morning, and if the King would not grant it they would take matters into their own hands.

That night the Comte de la Rochefoucauld, as usual, was the last in the King's bedchamber, and as he was about to leave (his gentleman in waiting, M. de Mergey, was eavesdropping) the King said to him, "Foucauld [so he called him], don't go away. It's late; let's talk nonsense (*balivernerons*) the rest of the night." "I can't," the Count answered, "I must go to bed and sleep." "You can sleep here with my valets de chambre." "Their feet stink," the Count answered, "Good night, *petit Maître*," and went. He then paid a visit to Mme la Princesse de Condé, the dowager, and then continued on to the room of Henry of Navarre, said good night and went away. At the foot of the stairs a man dressed in black took him aside and talked some time, and then departed. The Count told M. de Mergey to go back to the King of Navarre's room and tell him that he had been warned that M. de Guise and M. de Nevers were out and had not come back to sleep in the Louvre. Mergey found Navarre in bed with Margot, and whispered his message. Navarre told him to bid the Count come to him early in the morning. Mergey then went downstairs and found La Rochefoucauld talking with M. de Nançay, captain of the guards. Those two then went to Navarre's room, but did not stay long.

There were a lot of Huguenot gentlemen in Navarre's antechamber. Nançay put his head in that room and counted how many were there, and said "Gentlemen, if any of you wish to leave, it is time, for we are going to lock the gates." The Huguenots answered that they preferred to stay and play cards. Then Nançay and La Rochefoucauld went down into the courtyard, where they found the King's guards drawn up, Switzers, Scots and Frenchmen, all the way from the stairs, that led from the great hall, to the door. There, the warden of the gate, M. de Rambouillet, was sitting on a little block of wood, beside the postern, which was the only door open. Mergey was an old friend of his, and as he was going out Rambouillet took him by the hand, squeezed it and said sadly, "Good-bye, my friend."

About midnight the King sent for Navarre and Condé to come

to the royal bedchamber. At the door their gentlemen wished to enter with them, but the soldiers stationed there would not let them. Navarre looked at them sorrowfully and said, "Good-bye, my friends, God knows whether we shall see one another again," and the two princes went in. The King spoke: "Ever since my infancy the public peace has been broken by war after war, but now, by God's grace, I have taken measures to choke the cause. Coligny, the head of all this trouble, has been killed by my command, and I have ordered all wicked rascals, infected by the same ideas as he, to be dealt with in the same manner. I am not ignorant of the evil you two have done me by putting yourselves at the head of the rebels and making war on me. I have reason enough for taking revenge for this outrage you have done me, and I could have no more favorable opportunity, but, in consideration of our relationship and your youth, I am willing to forget the past and believe that what you have done against the welfare of the country was less of your own free will than from the counsels of Coligny and his partisans, who are already punished as they deserve, or soon will be. Your faults will be buried in eternal oblivion, provided you will make up for them by sincere loyalty and obedience. You must abjure the profane doctrine you have embraced and return in good faith to the Roman Catholic religion. I have received that faith from my ancestors, and I will permit no other in my Kingdom. It is for you to decide whether you will accept these terms or receive the same treatment as the others."

Navarre was politic and wary; he begged the King not to harm their bodies or their consciences, and they would never fail in loyalty. But Condé spoke out. He said he could not believe that the King would violate his word, that a religion could not be taken up at will, that his life and possessions were in the King's hands to dispose of as he wished, but for his religion he was accountable only to God, and he had rather lose his life than renounce the creed he knew to be true. The King retorted angrily that Condé was a rebel and the son of a rebel, and that if he did not

forego his obstinacy within three days he would lose his head. At that the two princes were left to think the matter over.

Meanwhile Margot, left alone, thinking her sister's reasons for alarm had been proved false, fell asleep, but very soon she was awakened by knocks and kicks on the door and cries of "Navarre! Navarre!" Her maid, thinking it was the King of Navarre in a great hurry, opened the door as fast as she could; and in dashed a Huguenot gentleman, Gabriel de Lévis, Vicomte de Léran, with wounds on the arm and neck, chased by four soldiers, who pursued him into the room. The fugitive jumped on the bed and caught hold of Margot, and the two rolled over into the space between the bed and wall. Both screamed in terror. M. de Nançay happened to come in, and seeing Margot in this situation could not refrain from laughing. He rebuked the soldiers for such impropriety, sent them out, and promised her to spare the poor man's life. Margot had his wounds dressed and bade him sleep in her boudoir till they were healed. She had to change her shift, it was so bloody. Then M. de Nançay told her what had happened, and that her husband was safe in the King's bedchamber. She put on a dressing gown, and Nançay led her, more dead than alive, to her sister Claude's bedroom. As she entered the antechamber, the doors being wide open, another fugitive chased by soldiers was struck down not three steps from her. There two of her husband's gentlemen came and besought her to save their lives. She fell on her knees before the King and the Queen Mother, and at last they granted her request. All of Navarre's gentlemen, except these, had been led down into the court and murdered outside the King's door.

Margot's sister-in-law, the pretty Queen Elizabeth, had gone to bed early, and, on waking, learned from her attendants what had been going on. "Alas!" she cried, "does my husband the King know of it?" "Yes, Madam, it was he that ordered it." "O Lord," she cried, "what does it mean, what counsellors are they that gave such advice? O God, I beseech you to forgive him, for, if you are

not merciful, I fear that this wrongdoing will not be pardoned." Then, with tears in her eyes, she asked for her prayer book and began to pray.

Meanwhile the tocsin had rung from Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois, and at the signal Guise, d'Aumale and Angoulême rode to the Admiral's lodgings. There Guise spoke to Cosseins, the officer ostensibly sent to protect Coligny. Cosseins rapped on the door of the house, and La Bonne, the Admiral's maître d'hôtel, opened the door. Cosseins poignarded him and rushed in at the head of his soldiers. The five Switzers sent by Henri de Navarre ran to the door of the stairway and locked it from the inside; one was shot on the way. The door was smashed, the assailants burst in, killed another Switzer and rushed upstairs to the Admiral's room. At the noise the Admiral had got out of bed. An attendant said, "Monseigneur, God calls us to Himself; the door is forced, there are no means of defense." Coligny answered, "I have long been ready to die; you men save yourselves. You can't save my life. I commit my soul to God's mercy." The murderers rushed in. Besme, one of the Guise household, pushed forward and struck the Admiral, crying, "Traitor, give me back my master's blood that you so wickedly shed." It was soon over. The Duke of Guise called from outside, "Is he dead?" Besme answered, "Yes." Guise said, "M. d'Angoulême won't believe it till he sees him at his feet." The body, still breathing, was thrown from the window. The King's brother, Angoulême, wiped the blood from the face in order to make sure of the Admiral's identity, then he shouted, "Come on, friends, let's continue our work; the King's orders!" And off he went, with Guise and d'Aumale, in search of Montgomery. Bells were now ringing all about. In another part of the city Nevers, Tavannes and Montpensier rode through the streets crying out, "No quarter!" Tavannes shouted, "Bleed 'em, bleed 'em! The doctors say that blood-letting is as beneficial in August as in the month of May!"



*(Photograph by Giraudon)*

Gaspard de Coligny



## CHAPTER XXVIII

### ESCAPES AND EXPLANATIONS

Across the river, on the south side in the faubourg Saint-Germain, a group of distinguished Huguenots had passed the night: Gabriel de Montgomery, the Scotch lord, who ran the fatal course against Henri II, the Vidame de Chartres, the Sieur de Pardaillan, and a number of others. They had a feeling that they had rather not be in the city itself. The task of making away with these gentlemen had been assigned to Laurent de Maugiron, a good Catholic, and the Duc de Guise had promised him a thousand of the Paris militia for that purpose. But the militia were occupied with pillage, and there was delay before other troops could be sent in their place. And when Maugiron had crossed the river and arrived at the gate of the faubourg, he found he had the wrong keys. By this time it was broad day, and the Huguenots could see and hear what was going on; they rode away at full gallop. The Duc de Guise pursued them as far as Montfort l'Amaury, halfway to Dreux, near thirty miles from Paris, but he could not catch them.

The Royalists were more fortunate in the city. Téligny, the Admiral's son-in-law, escaped onto the roof of the Admiral's house, but was overtaken by guards of the Duc d'Anjou—one could tell them by the black, white and green stripes on their clothes—and killed. La Rouchefoucauld had gone to his lodgings—you remember how he refused to stay at the Louvre with the King, who had been fond of him on account of his good manners and his high spirits—and was preparing for bed, and half undressed, when he heard a rap on the door and a voice from the outside, which said he was M. La Barge, one of the King's officers, and that he had a

message for him from the King. The Comte bade his servant open the door, and in came masked men. La Rochefoucauld thought it was the King and a band of mummers, and that they had come to pretend to flog him as a jest, and he begged them to treat him gently. They did not leave him in error long; they looted the house before his eyes and then killed him. Antoine de Clermont, a half brother of the Prince de Porcien, whose widow Catherine de Clèves had married the Duc de Guise, was murdered by Bussy d'Amboise, who had a lawsuit against him and availed himself of the occasion. De Thou enumerates a list of these murdered noblemen, Marasin de Guerchy, Baudiné Puviant, Berni, Charles de Quellenec, and says their naked bodies were dragged under the windows of the Louvre for the Queen Mother and the ladies of the court to stare at. Lavardin was nearly saved, but a man came up saying he was sent by the King, and poignarded him; Brion, tutor to the little Prince de Conti, was killed in the boy's arms as the boy tried in vain to save him. François Nompar de Caumont was in bed with his two young sons; the father and one son were stabbed to death, the other boy, scarcely twelve, all smeared with blood, lay still under the two corpses and escaped, to become a friend and companion of Henry of Navarre. De Thou gives many other names of murdered men belonging to the high nobility of France; one of them, Beauvoir, had been Navarre's tutor.

De Thou says: "The city was nothing but a spectacle of horror and carnage; every street, every spot, resounded with the noise that these madmen made, running here and there and everywhere to kill and loot; you could hear nothing but lamentation and howling of men stabbed, or about to be stabbed; you saw nothing but dead bodies flung from windows. Corpses lay everywhere, filling houses and courtyards, and some were dragged through the muddy streets, which flowed with blood. An innumerable number of people, men, women, even those great with child, and children, were massacred." Anne de Terrière, Seigneur de Chappes, a famous lawyer, eighty years old, bargained with the *Prévôt des*

Marchands for his life, and ceded a house he held at Versailles; after he had executed the deed they killed him. Madame de Longueil, niece of a Cardinal, a very cultivated lady, was offered life upon the denial of her religion; she refused, and was murdered. Pierre Ramus, a scholar enshrined in every encyclopedia, was another; and so on, and so on. One of the notorious butchers was a goldsmith named Crucé. De Thou says: "I remember seeing him many times, always with horror, a man of gallowsbird countenance, who bared his arm and boasted, in his insolence, that that arm had killed that day more than four hundred men." Even Catholics who were called *politiques*, middle-of-the-road, who were opposed to fanaticism, Catholic or Huguenot, and wanted peace—such as the Montmorency brothers—ran great danger.

But, indeed, a number were saved. The King is recorded as having pardoned three noblemen, and scores were saved by the Duc de Guise. Others escaped by an apparent interposition of Providence.

Young Du Plessis-Mornay, who afterwards became a very distinguished man, was lodging in the Rue Saint-Jacques, at the Sign of the Golden Compass. He belonged to a family that had "abjured idolatry," and had come to Paris to make a report to Coligny on conditions in Holland and Flanders. He had heard rumours of danger, and had warned in vain the Admiral's household; and on Saturday morning had sent his mother out of the city. Very early on Sunday morning he sent his servant out for news. The servant hurried back with tidings of what was going on, and Du Plessis-Mornay hid in a little space between the ceiling of the top story and the roof. On Monday, the landlord told him that a gang of men was making a house-to-house search, and that he must go; so the lad put on a suit of workman's clothes, and managed to slip out, but within an inch of his life.

Madame de Feuquières, a young widow, who had learned "the truth" in her father's house, was aroused by her maid on Sunday morning with the tidings that there was a general massacre. She

took her little girl and hurried to a friend's house, where soon forty refugees had gathered. But the house ceased to be safe, and all but two ladies slunk away; Mme de Feuquières, with her little girl and her servant, crawled into a hollow under a gable, while the other lady hid in a woodpile. Mme de Feuquières found it necessary to shift her abode from house to house, but after eleven days she got out of the city, and lived to marry the young Du Plessis-Mornay.

Another lad, thirteen years old, destined to fame as the Duc de Sully, had come to Paris to attend Henry of Navarre's wedding, although his father had predicted that "if the wedding is celebrated in Paris, the liveries will be incarnadine." On Sunday morning the tocsin awoke him, his tutor and his valet; these two latter went out into the street to learn what the matter was. Sully never saw them again. His landlord, a Huguenot, hastily went off to Mass and wished to take Sully with him, but Sully refused to go. He has told of his escape.

"I made up my mind to try to reach the Collège de Bourgogne, where I was a student, although it was far from my lodgings. The distance made it dangerous. I put on my student's gown, and, taking a large breviary under my arm, went downstairs. As I walked out into the street I was horrified; there were madmen running to and fro, smashing down doors and shouting, 'Kill, kill, massacre the Huguenots.' Blood spattered before my eyes, and doubled my fear. I ran into a clump of soldiers, who stopped me. They plied me with questions, and began to jostle me about, when luckily they saw my breviary. That served as my safe-conduct. Twice again the same thing happened, and twice again I escaped. At last I reached the Collège de Bourgogne; but there a greater danger awaited me. The porter refused to let me in, and I remained out in the street at the mercy of the madmen, who kept increasing in numbers. I bethought myself of asking for the Principal of the college, a good man who was very friendly to me, and, by the aid of a little money, got in. The Principal took me to

his room, where two inhuman priests talked of the Sicilian Vespers and tried to get me out of his hands, saying that the order was to kill every one down to babies at the breast. The Principal locked me up in an out-of-the-way closet, where I stayed for three days." A letter came from his father telling him to do whatever Henry of Navarre did, even go to Mass. And so he was saved.

The list of esapes, however, is short.

The King, uncertain as to what public opinion would be, deemed it prudent to follow his mother's plan and throw the blame on the Guises. He wrote that same day to all the provincial governors that the trouble had begun without his having anything to do with it, or knowing anything about it beforehand. His circular read:

"It happened that the Guises, together with their adherents, lords and gentlemen, who have no small power in this city, as everybody knows, having learned that the friends of the Admiral intended to wreak vengeance upon them for his wound, suspecting them to be the authors of the attempt, for that reason rose up last night, and between the one party and the other there occurred *une bien grande et lamentable sédition*. The guard stationed to protect the Admiral's house was overpowered, and they killed him and several gentlemen with him; others have been massacred in many places of the city. And this was done with such fury that it was impossible to apply a remedy, as one would have wished, for I was very busy with my guards and other troops to save myself and my brothers in the Louvre. Afterwards it was possible to attend to the suppression of the sedition, which, thanks be to God, is now dying down. This sedition was the consequence of a private quarrel of long standing between the two houses. I had always foreseen that trouble would come of it, and had done all that was possible to appease it, as everybody knows. In this there is no breach of the Edict of Pacification; on the contrary I wish it upheld as much as ever . . ."

At the same time the King sent Monsieur de Nançay to Châtillon to arrest the wives and children and Coligny and Andelot, and fetch them to Paris, and he wrote to M. de Matignon, Lieutenant-General in Normandy, "Please ascertain, but *doulcement et sans grand bruit*, where M. de Montgomery has retired, so that you can muster some troops and take him prisoner, or cause him to be taken, and make so sure of him that I may rest in peace; but do not let anybody know that I have written to you about it, and proceed as adroitly as possible."

And then the Queen Mother discovered that the citizens of Paris were delighted with what had been done, that fanatical Catholics everywhere shouted approval; and she, in her haste and trepidation, had been bidding the King ascribe what turned out to be, not blame, but glory, to the Guises. She made a volte-face; the credit must not be given to the Guises, nor shared with them, all must be assumed by the King. The poor fellow was obliged to throw consistency to the winds. *Très obéissant à sa mère*, the next day, Tuesday, he summoned the Parlement de Paris and declared that "all that had passed during the last two days had been done by his express command in order to punish those men who time and time again had conspired against himself, his mother the Queen and his brothers, for the purpose of destroying the Catholic religion, overthrowing the monarchy, and establishing, upon the foundations of heresy, a new form of government in France." And the Queen Mother strengthened her and her son's claim to the glory, quoting the words of Christ, *Beatus qui non fuerit in me scandalizatus*, Blessed is he that is not offended because of me.

But it is precarious to stand with one foot on one theory, and the other foot upon an opposite theory, and French diplomacy had to exercise all its ingenuity in confronting first sympathetic Papists and then unsympathetic Protestants. In especial M. de la Mothe-Fénelon, ambassador to England, had some difficulty in presenting the true view of the affair to Queen Elizabeth. He reports to

the King that after being kept waiting three days he was admitted to an audience:

“She advanced ten or twelve steps to greet me, in a sad and stern but very polite manner, and, having taken me apart to a window, after making excuses for the delay of my audience, asked me if it were possible to believe her ears for the extraordinary news that was published concerning a King that she honored and loved, and in whom she had more confidence than in anybody else. I replied that in truth I had come to condole with her, on Your Majesty’s behalf, for an extremely lamentable misfortune, through which you were constrained to go, with greater regret than you had ever felt since you were born. And I repeated to her the whole story, according to my instructions, adding some details that I deemed necessary to make her understand how Your Majesty had been full of apprehension in the face of two extreme dangers, that arose so suddenly that you had scarce an hour’s time to ward them off: one for your own life, and the lives of the Queen your mother and of your brothers, and the other the inevitable recommencement of troubles, worse than in the past, so that you were constrained, to your more than mortal sorrow, not merely not to prevent, but to suffer to be carried out against the lives of the Admiral and his partisans, the execution of the very plan that they had prepared against your life, and to let fall on their own heads the results of rebellion. And that you had not omitted one single duty of a good king with respect to justice, not one duty of a good king towards his subjects, nor of a kind lord and master towards a beloved servant, but had fulfilled them all towards the Admiral, at the time of his wound, as if he had been your own brother; and that before this time you had done all sorts of favors and kind entertainment to him and those of the new religion, and therefore you ask Her Majesty’s condolence all the more because of their wicked purpose and for the horrible ingratitude they had

shown towards you; and I told her how some of them, before dying, had confessed that they were justly punished for having conspired against their King. And, finally, that you felt sorry for yourself [*vous vous condoliez*] to have had to cut and cast off an arm of your Kingdom rather than let the whole body perish, and that you are sure she will grieve for your misfortune, and will help you all she can to lift you up again and moderate your sorrow.

“The Queen, finding me speak perhaps in a different fashion from what she expected, inquired into nice details, and then said that she hoped with all her heart that the crimes newly imputed to the Admiral and his friends were greater than those that had been remarked before, and that their present conspiracy had been far worse than in the past and more heinous than her ambassador M. Walsingham had written, that what I had added did not exaggerate them, and that, therefore, their demerits rendered them worthy of the cruel deaths they had suffered. . . . But that what lay heavy on her heart was fear for your reputation, for she had picked you out from among all Christian princes (since she had no husband), to love and reverence as if she were your wife, and that she was infinitely jealous of your honor, and that you may believe she has argued for your justification and innocence, more than she would have done for her own, and had assured people, on her life, that these murders could never have sprung from your natural disposition, but some strange misfortune had caused them, that would be more clearly understood later. But that, since then, when many details were reported to her of what had happened in your presence, and that you had even made your Parlement approve it all, as if there were no laws in France against those who conspired against Your Majesty, except by approving massacre, she did not know what to say, and feared that great annoyances might happen to you, and she prayed God fervently to turn them aside from you.”

The poor ambassador thanked her for her understanding, and

assured her that the King had not violated his pact with the Huguenots, but was resolute to observe it strictly, etc., etc. In fact, M. de La Mothe-Fénelon found himself in one of the most awkward plights that can confront an ambassador. The Queen did not spare him, but said she was afraid that the King's counsellors, who had made him abandon his own national subjects, might make him disregardful of a foreigner like herself, although such a good friend, etc., etc. And, after that interview was over, M. de la Mothe-Fénelon was obliged to go and repeat his story to the members of her Council.

But however scandalized the Protestant world, however alienated the moderate party of the *Politiques*, staunch Catholics from the Pope down applauded and praised the King. The Cardinal of Lorraine, who was in Rome at the time, rejoiced with a whole heart. He wrote to the King: "Sire, it is the very best thing I had ever dared desire or hope. I am positive that from this beginning the actions of Your Majesty will grow from day to day to the glory of God, to the immortality of your name, making your empire grow and your power feared, and that God will keep you so that in a little time His great favours will be manifest in you." He arranged a celebration, at which the Pope assisted, in the French church of San Luigi on the Piazza Navona; and at his instigation a long band of little children, in surplices, carrying olive branches, made a procession through the streets of Rome, blessing and praising the Lord, who had inspired the King's heart to so happy and holy an enterprise, from which was to be expected prosperity and peace for France and increase of the honor of God and of the Roman Catholic Church, which had good reason to rejoice. And the Cardinal, in recounting this in a letter, added, "My friend, this is the right hand of the Most High." And afterwards when the Cardinal was addressing a general assembly of the church, at which the King was present, he said: "Sire, the noble title of *Father of Religion*, *Pater Religionis*, a name once given to Clovis, belongs to you of strictest right on account of your

zeal for God. You saw your wretched subjects debauched from the true faith, and you proceeded deftly, and conducted your plans prudently, using holy dissimulation, a dissimulation full of piety, and you executed justice, justly, and, as is unusual, with hardly any fighting in view of the exigencies of the time and persons concerned, and with one blow you have purged the Kingdom of the false prophets, of their blasphemous heresies, their debauches and all exercise of their damnable religion. . . . By that you not only equal, but greatly surpass, the greatness and glory of your predecessors, in this noble name of 'Very Christian' [an appellation of the Kings of France]."

## CHAPTER XXIX

### THE DUKE'S PARTICIPATION

It is not easy to make out what share the Duc de Guise had in all this. Without a doubt Catherine and her *chers yeux*, Anjou, were the principal authors.

There is a document that purports to be Anjou's own account of the inception of the plot, *Discours à un personnage d'honneur et de qualité*, which, it is obvious from the contents and the circumstances under which it is alleged to have been written, was not written by him; nevertheless, it is perhaps more likely to contain truth than if it had been. This document says that Anjou and his mother decided on the assassination of Coligny, because Coligny's influence over the King was not only baneful, but directed against them:

"We consulted together, we compared all our observations and suspicions, and went over all past incidents [such, no doubt, as *fascheuses œillades* cast at Anjou by the King] and we were virtually certain that the Admiral had given the King a sinister opinion of us, and we determined, then and there, to get rid of him, and to arrange how with Mme de Nemours [the former Duchess of Guise], *the only person\** in whom we thought we could confide because of her hatred of him."

Maréchal de Tavannes, one of the Queen's little group, says, "The Queen, with two counsellors and M. d'Anjou, resolved on the death of the Admiral . . . and to cover herself by the pretext of the Guises, as the Admiral had taken part in killing their father."

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\* The italics are the author's.

Such a plan was by no means new. Three years before, Catherine had told the Spanish ambassador that for seven years she had been resolved on the Admiral's death. Now at last her purpose neared its goal. The first step was to choose an assassin. One suggestion—in order to involve the Guises—was for Henri de Guise to kill the Admiral in the game of riding at the ring in the garden of the Louvre. That plan presented difficulties; and then mother and son, after rejecting one candidate, decided that Maurevert was their man. The facts that are alleged to connect Henri de Guise with Maurevert are these. The house in which Maurevert concealed himself was tenanted by a former tutor of Henri's; M. de Chailly, who conducted Maurevert to that house, was bailiff to the Duc de Guise and maître d'hôtel to the Duc d'Aumale (but it was d'Aumale, and not Henri, who bade him hide Maurevert there); and Maurevert in his early youth had been in the household of Henri's father (but that must have been before Henri's time, for Maurevert married when Henri was but eleven years old). These facts hardly seem sufficient to go to a jury.

The real ground for suspecting the Duc de Guise was the knowledge that he and the Admiral were deadly enemies; that enmity would seem a reasonable ground for the Queen's making him privy to the plot. On the other hand, Catherine may well have thought that a secret would be better kept if the sharers were as few as possible; she may have feared that the Duke's impetuous nature would interfere with her control of the affair; she may not have wished him to know that she and Anjou had concocted the plot; and, besides, he was not necessary. I do not mean to suggest that he would have held back; by no means. He had waited nine years for an opportunity by which he "with wings as swift as meditation or the thoughts of love, might sweep to his revenge." Honor was his guide. As I have said, he had no more doubts of his duty to avenge the death of his father than Hamlet had, or Orestes. All gentlemen thought so. Brantôme says a son must avenge his father's death and not let his soul be dirtied for



*(Photograph by Giraudon)*  
Charles de Lorraine, Duc de Mayenne



lack of *une belle résolution* and a *bon coup*; to be sure, he continues, the strictest Christians say a man should forget offenses, and that may be right for monks and anchorites, but not for those who wear sword on thigh and make profession of their chivalry. At all events, the failure of the first attack on the Admiral made the Duke, whether he had been instrumental in that first attack or not, the natural instrument for the second.

But in the plot of the general massacre he had no part. The document I have quoted is very explicit on that point. According to it, Catherine and Anjou decided between them that the Admiral must be finished with; they sent for the Queen's intimate counsellors, M. de Nevers, the Maréchaux Tavannes and De Retz and the Chancellor Birague, "but merely to consult with them how best to do what my mother and I had decided." Then the little group went to see the King, and after long arguments persuaded him to agree. He cried out in a violent passion, "*Par la mort Dieu*, since you think the Admiral should be killed, I consent, but all the Huguenots in France must also be killed, so that not one shall remain to reproach me afterwards." This done, the conspirators worked over the details of the execution of the plan. They called in the *Prévôt des Marchands*, and the captains of the guards. In this connection, and for the first time, the Duke is mentioned. "We made sure of the *Prévôt des Marchands*, of the captains of the city districts, and other persons who were thought to be strong party men, and we divided up the city districts, designating particular individuals to take care of specified persons; M. de Guise was designated to kill the Admiral." Tavannes supports this statement regarding Guise; he says: "*M. de Guise est envoyé querir . . . il lui est permis d'aller tuer l'admiral, venger la mort de son père*, Guise was sent for and permission given him to avenge his father's death."

The facts seem to be that the Duchesse de Nemours called in her brother d'Aumale to help, and that he made all the arrangements for putting Maurevert in ambuscade, and that Henri de

Guise had no part in the assassination, until he was called in when a general massacre had been decided on by the Queen and her advisers. Of course, he was happy to have a chance to fulfill his duty and gratify his revenge. De Thou says that he acted as the executive head of the organized bands of murderers, but I find no evidence of that. The facts seem to be that he acted under explicit orders, first to see that Coligny was killed, second to kill or capture Montgomery and his companions in the faubourg Saint-Germain. It was Tavannes and Nevers who rode through the main part of the town on the Right Bank urging the murderers on. Guise did what he was ordered to do, he saw that the Admiral was killed, and pursued Montgomery and his band for miles; those two assignments done, he did nothing else, he took no further part in the massacre. On the contrary, he opened his hôtel to Protestant fugitives, took them in under his protection, as many, it is said, as a hundred. His mother, the Duchesse de Nemours, took in the daughter of her old enemy, the former Chancellor l'Hôpital. And in the two provinces, Champagne and Burgundy, of which d'Aumale and Guise were governors, there were no persecutions, although in other provinces there were dreadful massacres.

There is nothing, I think, unless perhaps in the hot and wild accusations by enemies of his House, to show that he had any concern with the massacre except in killing Coligny and in the pursuit of Montgomery, and in both he was acting under the King's orders. Evidence of his conduct on other occasions supports this view. You remember that when he left Poitiers he bade the Commandant not to trouble the Huguenots so long as they obeyed the law. And at a meeting of the States-General at Blois (1576-1577), when asked to give his opinion as to the right course to pursue as to the rebellious Huguenots, he said:

“So young a soldier as I ought to blush to speak in the presence of the experienced generals who surround His Majesty. I feel myself more fitted to aid in the execution of their orders and follow their advice than to offer any myself. . . . However, people

think that the King, in order not to give his Protestant subjects any cause for suspicion, ought to give them all the assurances they may demand . . . and so I think His Majesty ought not to fail them in one single point, provided always that the Protestants remain quietly in their houses and do not contravene the King's will in any way. I beg very humbly to be excused from saying more, and His Majesty may be assured that I shall not spare life, nor possessions, against any power whatever, in the execution of whatever may be decided."

At that same meeting his brother, Mayenne, rounded out the Duke's meaning:

"Because some hindrance to peace may come from doubt or fear that certain of the King's subjects affect to entertain for the safety of their persons, I beg the King to forget the past, and embrace the Protestants, as if he were their father, and promise, and give, them every safeguard." . . .

When the Duke was serving under Alençon, the King's younger brother, in the capture of La Charité-sur-Loire, where the victors entered by a breach, Guise prevented some angry Italian mercenaries, irritated by the death of their commander, from taking vengeance on the Huguenot garrison, and showed himself "*conservateur du droit des gens et de la foi donnée*," as Huguenot d'Aubigné said. And, at another Huguenot town, Issoire, in the same campaign, where he led the assault, while the town was on fire and savage soldiers were raging through the streets, he took women and children for safety into his tent, and with his own hand killed a soldier who was dragging away a young girl by the hair of her head.

In fact, his clemency towards the Huguenots was so marked, so notorious, that his enemies asserted that he was trying to bid for their support in his ambition to gain the crown; but his enemies said against him whatever came to their minds, either that he was the incarnation of cruelty, or that he was kind to them because he wished their help. The fact remains that he was gentle towards

them. Shortly after the massacre, a pamphlet published in Paris said:

"Why is it that the House of Guise, who (as we know) are descended from Charlemagne, and are princes of France, does not recover the crown now? It only depends on a little dexterity. If they wish to act by force (with all due respect to the King) these Gentlemen of Guise can bring as many men into the field as the King can. They have as many friends as he, and more cities incline to their party than to the King's. And if the crown of France is to change wearers, they are not so silly or so stupid as not to prefer it on their heads than on that of a foreign Prince. . . . I have had experience of the insecurity under the present reign, and I should much rather (if I must speak out) have the crown in the Guise family than where it is. . . . The Huguenots are disgusted, once and for all, with the House of Valois, and in my opinion would be very glad, nay, would work, to have the House of Guise recover what belongs to it, being well assured that it would leave the Huguenots' conscience free in the exercise of their religion, and would keep its plighted word. . . . The Guises have already given the Huguenots occasion to see that they do not hate them as much as people say, for they saved the lives of many great noblemen, of the most prominent, and are saving others privily every day. Which shows clearly that the members of this family are not so black, nor such devils against the Huguenots as they are made out to be. Besides, being prudent Princes, they made the King take the responsibility, as he deserved, of this barbarous butchery, partly not to bear the blame themselves, partly to make sure that when the indignation of the nobles and the commons rises high, it shall discharge itself on the man who now boasts to have done the deed. . . . Both parties smile on you, O House of Guise. The great mass of the French people want you. The hearts of the nobility and of the people are widely alienated from the House of Valois, and very bitter against its behaviour; and, on the other hand, they are

devoted to you, and so attached to your House, that methinks the time is ripe."

The men of the House of Guise were of hot temper and quick susceptibilities, very tenacious of the respect due to the descendants of Charlemagne, and violent against any inferior that infringed it, but they were not cruel, and the Duc de Guise, I think from the evidence, was quite free from the guilt of the general massacre on Saint Bartholomew's day.

## CHAPTER XXX

### THE AFTERMATH

THE most tragic figure in this deviltry is the King, Charles IX. He possessed so many good qualities. Brantôme calls him "*un très grand roy de France*," and says that if his great captains "*qui s'amusèrent en ces misérables guerres civiles*" had fought foreign nations, the King might have achieved a third, or a half, of the greatness, felicity and noble deeds of Charlemagne. He says that even as a boy the King was brave, audacious, and full of hardihood, and wanted to lead his armies himself, but his mother would not let him. It is true that he had the ill-balanced Valois constitution, and was subject to fits of melancholy and of violent anger, so much so that to cure himself he gave up wine for *eau sucré*.

By nature he was open and frank; it was Albert Gondi, the Maréchal de Retz, a Florentine, "*fin, caut et trinquant, corrompu, grand menteur et dissimulateur*," who taught him to swear, to pretend and to play false. And so he came to think that swearing and blasphemy was a gentlemanlike way of speech. He was an excellent horseman, loved the chase and wrote a book about it; he would get up before dawn, and would call the hounds by voice or bugle. And he was very fond of his hunting dogs; some even lay under his table at his meals, and slept on the foot of his bed. One of his dogs, celebrated by Ronsard, seems to have been a bulldog bitch. In fair weather Charles was always outdoors, playing at *jeu de paume* or some active game, pall-mall or jumping, always overdoing his strength. He disliked to be indoors, quoting

*Le séjour des maisons, palais et bastimens  
Estoit le sépulchre des vivans,*

Staying in house, palace or hall,  
Is like being buried—not living at all.

Perhaps that is why he took to working furiously at a forge and beating out coins on it.

He was naturally intelligent, and had intellectual tastes; he was very fond of poetry, and wrote verses himself. Often, when it rained, or was too hot, or in bad weather of any sort, he would send for his friends, Ronsard, Dorat, Baïf and such, to come to his chamber and talk poetry, and he would encourage them to compose, and he made them read their verses aloud to him. But he himself was better at prose, perhaps because M. Jacques Amyot, the famous translator of Plutarch, had been his tutor. The poets, for their part, were never tired of reciting their obligations to the King. Baïf dedicated a collection of his poems to him:

*Puis que vostre faveur, ô mon grand Roy, m'inspire  
Les Graces de la Muse; et ma Muse respire  
Sous vostre libérale et bonne royaute,  
Qui la traite et nourrit en gaie liberté,  
C'est à vous que je doy tout ce que j'ay d'ouvrage,  
A vous qui me donnez et moyen et courage,  
Ouvrant de mon métier, faire ce cabinet  
De mes vers assemblés.*

Since to your favor, O great King,  
I owe what grace the Muses bring,  
And since my own Muse breathes again  
Under your good and gracious reign,  
Since her you feed, and her bid be  
Gay in her new-found liberty—  
To you my work is all behoden,  
You give me means, and me emboden  
To ply my trade, and at your hest  
Gather my verses in this chest.

The verses seem to me more meritorious for their expressions of gratitude than for their poetical excellence; and there is plenty of evidence that the poet's gratitude was deserved. In 1570 Baïf, with the help of his friend Joachim Thibaut de Courville, a musician, founded an *Académie de poésie et de musique*, "which was to be a company (made up of composers, singers, and players on musical instruments, and of respectable auditors), and a school not only to serve as a nursery [*pépinière*] from which one day poets and musicians would come forth, well-taught and trained to give pleasure, but also to be a profit to the public." These two friends presented a petition to the King, and he granted them a charter and accepted the title of *Protecteur et Premier Auditeur* of the Academy. There was opposition in the Parlement, for some of the members were afraid that the Academy would "tend to corrupt, soften, enervate and pervert" the French youth. But the King took the matter into his own hands and overrode the objections.

To this academy belonged all the poets of the *Pléiade*, as well as Amadis Jamyn and others. It occupied itself with questions of grammar and philology, and with founding a worthy theatre. Baïf, of course, was duly thankful and celebrated the King in many verses:

*Ce n'est pas d'aujourd'hui, ô grand Roy de la France,  
Que vous prouvez d'avoir en voz faits resemblance  
A ce grand Hercules qui la terre purgea  
De monstres et de vice, et au bien la rangea.*

It is not only today, O great King of France,  
That you in your deeds display resemblance  
To the great Hercules, who purged the earth  
Of monsters and vice and turned it to worth.

As these poets were good Catholics I presume that the King proved his resemblance to Hercules, who purged the earth of vice and monsters, by his purgation of the land from heretics. But, poor King! he had done that at the instigation of his mother;

from earliest youth he had been taught to be obedient to her, and also to guard his land from heretics. Ronsard had but echoed what everybody said to him:

*Vous devez vostre mère humblement honorer,  
La craindre et la servir: qui seulement de mère  
Ne vous sert pas icy, mais de garde et de père.  
Après il faut tenir la loy de vos ayeux,  
Qui furent Rois en terre et sont là haut aux cieux:  
Et garder que le peuple imprime en sa cervelle  
Le curieux discours d'une secte nouvelle.*

You must your mother humbly serve, honor and fear,  
For she as Mother now attends you,  
And as a Father, too, defends you.  
Next you must keep the law  
By your forefathers given,  
Who once were Kings on earth  
And now are high in Heaven,  
And see that vagaries of a novel sect  
Shall not your people's mind infect.

The great purification of his realm on that dreadful day had cost him sore. His whole nature seems to have been changed by this tremendous experience. Brantôme says that the old sweetness that they used to see on his face was seen no more. Everybody noticed this alteration. When M. de la Noue went to see the King a courtier said to him, "Remember when you are with the King to be very prudent and speak warily, for you will never again speak to the kind, benevolent, gracious King that you had before. He is wholly changed. He has more sternness now in his countenance than he ever had sweetness." No wonder that he felt the full meaning of Remy Bellau's *Discours de la Vanité*, when Belleau read to him at Fontainebleau the first four chapters, beginning

*De pure vanité la terre est toute pleine,  
Tout n'est que vanité des vanités très vaine,*

“Vanity, vanity, all is vanity,” and had him read it aloud several times, and be sure to finish it. Poor fellow!

However, at first it seemed as if the massacre had been a great success; almost all the chiefs, excepting Montgomery, were dead, and great numbers of erring men hurried in to acknowledge their mistakes and to hear Mass. But after a while the greatness of the success was seen to be overestimated. Queen Elizabeth, the English nation, the Protestant states of Germany and Scandinavia, were loud in their denunciations; many Catholics were shocked and alienated; and in the south and west of France the Huguenot ministers, men reared on the Old Testament, and inspired by the successes of the Israelites over Moabites, Amalekites, Amorites and other peoples (all singularly similar to the Catholic party), girded themselves, harangued their flocks, and gathered their fighting men together. Civil war began again, but the Duc de Guise does not come to the front of the stage, and we need not tarry over the siege of La Rochelle (1572), the election of Anjou to the throne of Poland (1573), or the death of Charles IX (May, 1574).

The Duc de Guise, of course, took part in the unsuccessful siege of La Rochelle, serving under the Duc d’Anjou, who was general-in-chief. And Brantôme, who was there and saw him intimately, records a characteristic anecdote. The Duke was very friendly to him, gave him a sword, silver mounted, doing him the honor, as Brantôme proudly reports, to say that he well deserved to possess it as he knew so well how to wield it; and sometimes the Duke borrowed Brantôme’s musket and took a shot at the enemy, in order to show the musketeers that their weapons were worthy of a duke’s handling. Occasionally, though he was twenty-three and Brantôme nearly forty, he called Brantôme “my son,” but usually, with great politeness, “M. de Bourdeille.” The Duke made him sit down on the ground beside him in the trenches, and chatted, and, what is not a universal practice with a superior in conversation with an inferior, listened to what Brantôme had to say. On this

occasion the Duke was talking of men who had been wounded and on that account made much of without deserving it.

*The Duke:* We must get ouselves wounded a little in order to make ourselves appreciated like those men, and talked about. It isn't our fault that we have not been, nor M. Strozzi's, nor mine, nor yours. There has not been a danger which we did not try to get into, nor an outpost but we were on duty there, and yet we have had such bad luck that we can't get *aucun petit coup heureux* [any lucky little blow] to mark us and make us noticeable. We shall have to admit that honor is running away from us. For my part, I shall have a Mass said tomorrow, when we make the assault, to pray God to send me *quelque petite heureuse harquebusade* [some nice little musket ball], so that I may go back with greater glory—for, at Court and with the ladies, glory depends more on blows received than on blows given.

*Brantôme:* Sir, those who know you, who have seen you in action, both here and in many another place, will always proclaim your courage, without the need of wounds; you have had enough. Be content. God will send you them at His good pleasure. In the meantime your conscience may be bold before the world, even before the ladies that you speak of.

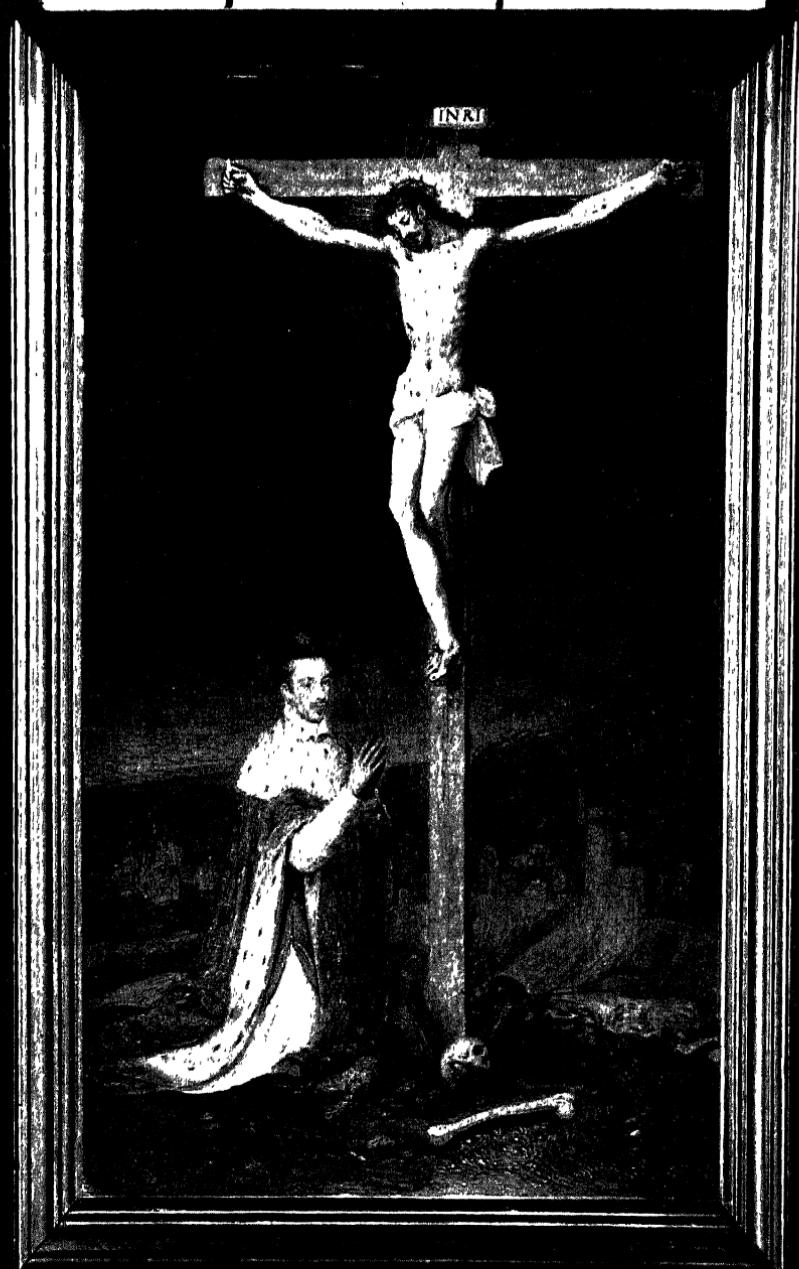
*The Duke:* You are right, and that comforts me. However, M. de Bourdeille, it remains a fact that, whatever we do, we cannot get a wound, and we shall go back to Court, and see the King and the ladies, and not be noticed. But when we are there we must stand by one another, and if we see one of those wounded gallants strutting about and showing off, with his arm in a sling, or limping with a stick or a crutch, we'll send him packing, if he has not got honest wounds, for we know the circumstances.

Brantôme, who admired the Duke's high spirit immensely, and says he was as brave as any man in the world, comments that

since he desired this little bit of good luck, at the cost of his blood, Fortune was very rude and surly to refuse it. But Brantôme blamed Fortune too soon. Before two years were out she treated the Duke handsomely. Within that time the Duc d'Anjou had succeeded to the throne as Henri III. His brother, Alençon, had joined the Huguenots, and a new civil war was raging; and Paris heard to its dismay that the Comte de Thoré, one of the sons of Anne de Montmorency, who had turned Huguenot, was on the march towards the Meuse with an advance guard of two or three thousand German *reiters*. The poor old Duchess Antoinette fled from Joinville and took refuge in Saint-Dizier. The Duc de Guise, who was Governor of Champagne, hurried to the defense of the province (September, 1575). He had no money, and could get none from the King. He wrote to his wife in desperation to raise some. "*Je n'ai un sou*," he says, and asks her to see if there is any in the King's chest, and if there is, not to be afraid but to send it on incessantly. And he begs her and his sister to send messengers out every which way, to stir up all their friends, lords and ladies, who could supply men or money. He encourages them not to be afraid, saying that the enemy could not take Joinville, and as for himself his greatest danger would be to break a wine glass in his hand.

The Protestant mercenaries, now full three thousand strong, crossed the Meuse in the north of Champagne, and, marching south past Mezières, crossed the Aisne, and on towards the Marne. The Duke hung upon their heels, and as they were crossing the latter river near Dormans he gave the order to attack. He won a complete victory, killing many and chasing the rest in rout; but as he rode in pursuit of a fleeing *reiter* the man turned and shot twice with his pistol, wounding the Duke in the leg and in the left cheek. The Duke was carried from the field, and the loss of his leadership enabled some twelve hundred horse of the enemy to escape. For two days the Duke could not speak, but surgeons, brought down from Paris by his uncle the Cardinal de Guise, took good care of him, and after six weeks in bed he was up and about. The wound

• Donné par M. Rodolphe KANN. •



• ECOLE FRANCAISE, XVI<sup>e</sup> Siècle.  
*Le Roi Henri III en prière au pied de la croix*

Henri III

(Photograph by Giraudon)



in his face left a great scar, and earned him, like his father, the proud title of *le Balafré*. Fortune could not have done him a better service. It is said that Henry of Navarre, hearing of the Duke's wound, hurried to the spot, and held the Duke's head while the surgeons were bleeding him. At this time the two princes were great friends, they ate and drank together, slept in the same room, went together to masquerades, ballets and carousels, went hunting together, played tennis and diced together, made calls together on the same ladies, and they rode through the streets of Paris on the same horse, the Duke riding on the the croup. Alas, the friendship was not perdurable.

Dormans is scarce sixty miles from Paris, and the news of the Duke's victory over the *reiters* soon reached there; the citizens were overjoyed, bells of jubilation were rung, services were held, and the King led a procession from the Bourbon Chapel hard by the Louvre to the Church of Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois. Henri de Guise was the hero of Paris. The old Duchess Antoinette went back to Joinville, and sent a servant to the venerable Church of Saint Nicolas near Nancy to pray for her grandson's safe recovery. Nevertheless, this victory had no effect on the campaign. The confederates—Huguenots, Politiques, foreign mercenaries—with the Duc d'Alençon, the King's brother and heir presumptive, at their head, were so strong that they were able to dictate their own terms, and they did. Henri III had no choice; the treaty forced upon him is known as *La Paix de Monsieur* in honor of the Duc d'Alençon, who, as the King's next brother, was known as *Monsieur* (May 6, 1576). The Protestants received liberty of worship everywhere, they were to have half the judges in every court, the nobles were confirmed in all the dignities they claimed, Alençon received the counties of Anjou, Touraine and Berry, the victims of Saint-Bartholomew were rehabilitated, and the King declared that the events of that day had happened to his very great regret and displeasure, and he promised to pay the wages of the German mercenaries hired by the rebels.

## CHAPTER XXXI

### THE LEAGUE

THE *Paix de Monsieur* was too much for the Catholics to bear. The great mass of the French people were bewildered and indignant; rebellion had been rewarded, the people who had deserted the religion of their fathers and flouted their King, had had the fatted calf killed, and were rejoicing in their insolence. This Catholic majority felt the great tide of revival that had been rising in Latin Europe. The Council of Trent (1545-1563), convoked to reconcile conflicting opinions, of course reconciled nothing, but it did accomplish much in the way of removing abuses in the Church; canons regulated the duties of the bishops, the conduct of the clergy, the affairs of nunneries and monasteries, and restored spiritual standards. Dogmas were defined and hardened, and thereby secured the advantages of exactness and fixity. A good man need no longer bother his head over theological uncertainties, he could find out the truth by consulting the canons. More potent still had been the work of the Order of Jesus. That great man, Ignatius Loyola, with an unprecedented union of practical sagacity and spiritual passion, acting upon the theory that war with heresy is not merely the affair of popes, prelates and clergy, had conceived the idea of universal conscription, of rallying all individuals to militant service, and his disciples had gone all over the world, from South America to China, in alien countries, even in England, disguised and pursued, to preach his doctrines and marshal the faithful. In France the Jesuits had become a power. The Cardinal of Lorraine had been of the greatest help in bringing them to Paris. Crowned heads, too, realized

that Protestantism made for independence, democracy, disloyalty and rebellion, and deemed it prudent to stand shoulder to shoulder.

Comforted by these great currents of the Counter Reformation, the French Catholics sought strength in banding themselves together. They could see that the Huguenots, though a small minority, had achieved so much because of their organization, and they began to form local leagues. The Catholic Governor in Péronne, Picardie, took the lead. He proclaimed: "It is high time for us, in order to forestall and thwart the treacherous plots of the heretics, to form a Holy Christian Union, by effecting close agreement and complete understanding among the orthodox loyal subjects of the King, for that is the only way God has now left us to restore His holy service and also loyalty to His Majesty."

This was the beginning of the League that carried the fortunes of the House of Guise so high, and all but seated it on the throne of France. From Picardie the notion spread. Adherents were recruited all over the country and its principles adopted. In Languedoc, for instance, the articles of the covenant ran thus:

"We promise under oath to use all means we can to restore and maintain the exercise of our Catholic Religion, Apostolic and Roman, in which we have been nurtured and in which we wish to live and die. We will raise a goodly number of soldiers, horse and foot, and also money to provide means to equip them. We will supplicate His Majesty to validate and approve this, inasmuch as the soldiers are to be employed for necessary and holy purposes. We will establish communications with neighbor provinces, so that all can aid one another. And if any Catholic, after having been requested to enter into the present association, makes any difficulty, or shuffles and dillydallies, he shall be deemed an enemy of God, a deserter from his religion, a rebel to his King, a traitor to his Country, and, by the universal consent of good men, he shall be abandoned and ostracized by all, and left exposed to all the insults and oppressions that may come upon him."

Here is another form of the covenant in another province:

“We bind ourselves to employ our property and our lives for the success of the Holy League, and to fight to the death those who try to block us. All those that sign will be wards of the League, and if they are attacked, troubled or molested we will defend them, even by force, against anybody whatsoever. If any, after taking the oath, shall renounce, they will be treated as rebels, refractory to the will of God; and those that exact vengeance for it shall not be disturbed. A chief shall be elected, whom all the confederates will be obliged to obey, and they that refuse shall be punished according to his judgment. And we will make every effort to procure partisans, and arms and all necessaries, for this Holy League, each one according to his power. They that refuse to join will be treated as enemies, and attacked with weapons in our hands. The chief, of his own authority, shall decide all disputes and disagreements that may come up among the confederates, and no one may have recourse to the ordinary magistrates except by his permission.”

Besides these local associations, a union of princes, lords and gentlemen proclaimed, in the name of the Trinity, their determination “to establish the law of God in its entirety, to restore and maintain His holy service according to the form and ritual of the Holy Catholic Church, Apostolic and Roman”; but they added that they should uphold the King, with the obedience due him from his subjects, but without prejudice to what might be ordered by the States-General, and they made a further provision about restoring to the provinces their ancient liberties and franchises, “as they were in the time of Clovis, the first Christian King, or in a still better form, if such could be found.”

This reference to Clovis had more in it than met the ear. The House of Valois and the House of Bourbon went back to Saint Louis, and further to Hugh Capet, and there they stopped; but,

as the name Clovis suggested, there was an older dynasty, and marked with a greater glory than that of Hugh Capet, the Carlovingian; and, of that great stock, the House of Guise was the most available. The King had no children, and his sole surviving brother, Alençon, had none; a curse seemed to lie on the family. The next heir was Henry of Navarre, now a Huguenot once more, and a heretic was not to be endured upon the throne of a long line of Most Christian Kings.

No one can doubt that devotion to the ancient religious faith was the moving power in these organizations, and there is also no doubt that the great nobles sought to use them to their own advantage; the restoration of ancient provincial liberties is a mere euphemism for restoration of ancient feudal privileges; nevertheless, it is also beyond question that many of the nobles, and certainly the Guises, were sincere in their disapproval and condemnation of heretics and secessionists. It also clearly appears from an analysis of these articles of confederation that, between the States-General, obviously regarded as the supreme source of authority, and the revivified feudal barons, the power of the King would be greatly curtailed. The King, reasonably enough, was alarmed, and, turning the matter over in his mind, conceived what he thought a very clever idea. He would oust the Duc de Guise from the position of head of the League, and become its chief himself.

So he wrote to the governors of the provinces commanding the League, but changed the covenant so as to preserve intact the prerogatives of the Crown and put his will, in place of that of the States-General, as the source of law and authority. He thought he had jockeyed the Guises, and that by means of the League he could raise an army—reckoning up its numbers in the rosy light of hope—and then with that large army he would crush the Huguenots, and the Politiques, and set the throne high above the dangers that had threatened it for years, and then he would be free to enjoy life with his minions. He was like the milkmaid with her *pot au lait*. The milk was spilled.

I need not narrate the meeting of the States-General in 1576. The Huguenots stayed away, and a majority of the Third Estate demanded that Protestant worship be suppressed, and all the ministers banished. That was not conciliatory. Fighting began again, the Huguenots had the worst of it, and had to accept a marked diminution of privileges (*La paix de Bergerac*, Sept. 17, 1577). And the King, thinking himself in a position of strength, and jealous of the House of Guise, ordered all leagues of every kind to be dissolved. He said "he had made a resolution not to permit any worship but that of the Roman Catholic Church, as he had sworn at his coronation, solemnly, before the body of Jesus Christ when he took Communion, and before the King of Navarre, and all the peers and people; and he was going to declare that he had granted the late Edict of Pacification (the *Paix de Monsieur*), only in order to bring his brother Alençon back, and chase the foreign mercenaries out of the Kingdom, in the hope that such action would bring some repose to the Kingdom, but always with the intention of restoring the Catholic religion as soon as he could as the only one, as it had been in the time of the Kings his predecessors. And he wished everybody to understand that he would not allow any more any worship contrary to his coronation oath; he felt that any promise that he might make contrary to that oath was of no obligation."

The Estates approved the King's plan for one religion only, but refused to raise any moneys to accomplish the plan. Help came from the other side. Politiques and Huguenots fell apart, Alençon became reconciled to his brother and resumed his position as heir presumptive, the Maréchal Damville, head of the Politiques, also was won over; Henry of Navarre tried to be half Protestant, half Catholic; and the fighting which had begun again went against the rebels.

## CHAPTER XXXII

### HENRI III

THE story of these religious wars, with their intermittances, their edicts, their cruelties and absurdities, becomes more and more tedious; I doubt if anybody, however good a Catholic, however devout a Protestant, would read it, were it not that these three men, Henry of Valois, Henry of Bourbon, and Henry of Guise, by their contrasts of character, bring a vivid dramatic interest to the dull boredom of religious and political quarrels. Henry of Navarre is one of the heroes of high romance. Gay—he had inherited the *humeur libre vive enjouée* of his mother—bold, self-confident, endowed with all the gifts of manner, bearing, word and gesture that make a man attractive to other men—for he was essentially a man's man, though women, too, found him attractive, and he them—intelligent, wary, a sound mind in a sound body, Henry of Navarre was a king among a thousand. His mother followed the nurture that commended itself to Montaigne, who likely enough had Henry of Navarre in his mind, “Harden your boy to sweat, to bear cold, and wind and sun, and dangers that he should despise; take from him all softness and luxury—of bed, clothes, eating and drinking—accustom him to all sorts of things, so that he shall not be a *beau garçon* [a fop] or a *dameret* [a philanderer], but a vigorous, lusty fellow.” Not tall, not handsome—the Bourbons were singularly uncomely to look upon—his body had been trained, from the time he could toddle, in all athletic exercises, so that physically as well as mentally Navarre became an admirable guerrilla chief, and from that a great political leader.

But he is not more than a secondary personage in my story,

and I pass on to Henri de Valois, one of the most singularly interesting personages on the stage of history. Judged by the conventional standards of social morality, he is to be condemned, damnable in the strict sense of the word, and he always has been damned by historians, but for a psychologist he must be most acceptable on account of the extraordinary blending of qualities, waywardly combined by nature and fortune, in his character.

He was born in 1551, the child of a simple-minded, phlegmatic French father and a subtle, clever, deceitful Italian mother, a woman governed by instinct and ambition. Probably his childhood was not very happy; palaces are not usually adapted to making little children, or older people, happy. However, his earliest recollections must have been of a tall handsome lady, calm, collected and kind, with gentle white hands, who came to give advice about his nurture and bringing up, for Diane de Poitiers was very ready to do what she could for Henry the Second's children; Catherine de Médicis was jealous, but Diana was not.

The child learned to speak Italian as well as French, for his mother had a train of Italian attendants, and he showed early a taste for things of the mind. He had the best preceptor, perhaps, that France could give. Jacques Amyot, famous for his translation of Plutarch, was a gentleman, a scholar, endowed with the delicate qualities of mind that gave a charm to whatever he wrote. Queen Marguerite of Navarre had appointed him professor of Latin and Greek at the University of Bourges, for he was the sort of man she liked, a religious man, Catholic without unreasonableness, and there he stayed a dozen years; and finally, Henry II appointed him preceptor of his sons. Of these Henry was the cleverest. Amyot speaks of his ardent desire to learn and understand serious subjects, and says that he had the quick intelligence of his grandfather François, and with a patience in listening, and in reading and writing, that François did not have. As we look back on his reign, it is odd to think of this studious, intellectual boy, reading Plutarch's Lives—Epaminondas and Brutus, Aris-

tides and Cato—and seeking under Amyot's guidance to take the lessons to heart, and he seems to have acquired for a time a violent passion for glory.

The boy had many gifts: his voice was agreeable, like his mother's, and he talked well, and, more than that, had an oratorical facility, almost eloquence; he was well made, graceful, and with much adolescent charm. Although less fond of poetry than his brother Charles, he liked it and wished to enjoy it intelligently, he wished to be a cultivated gentleman. Even when he became King, and had heretics and rebellions on his hands, he took up the study of Latin which he had neglected as a boy, and read Polybius and Tacitus. Italian scholars in attendance on the Queen used to discuss Machiavelli with him. He liked the arts and patronized them. In spite of his fanatical Catholicism, he protected Bernard Palissy, the famous potter, and Henri Estienne, the hellenist and philologist, although they were Huguenots.

His regard for poetry, and his patronage, or hoped-for patronage, was recognized by all the chief poets of the time. Baïf dedicated his *Amours de Baïf* to him while he was still Duc d'Anjou,

*Prince, Grand Duc . . .  
Preux, courageux, vaillant, constant et sage!*

saying that a poem that celebrated Anjou's military glory would have been more suitable. And when Henri, already King of Poland, came back to France, Baïf was ready with his welcome,

*O noble Henry debonnaire!*

and with prophecies that unfortunately were not to come true. Another poem celebrates the King's arrival and congratulates France. Life has its little ironies.

*Grâces à mon Roy debonnaire  
Son regne un siècle nous vient faire  
... rare en son bonheur.*

The poets really believed that he—*bon, gracieux et bienfaiteur*—would bring back Saturn's reign and the golden age. I know that a poet, *Secrétaire de la chambre du Roy*, is not regarded as an impartial witness. But, indeed, the young, gifted, gracious King seemed admirable to his loyal subjects. Like Baïf, they approved of the assassination of Coligny, and believed that Coligny's soul was suffering torments among the damned. It is hard to forget our humane, and our Protestant, traditions, and Macaulay's lines, “Good Coligny's hoary hair all dabbled in his blood,” and realize that the loyal Catholics looked on the Huguenot leaders as we do upon the felon gangs that infest our cities, and naturally applauded Anjou's doings on St. Bartholomew's Day. At all events, Henri III appeared as a patron of literature and learning, and continued his brother's favour towards the young Academy. The King used to go out to the house in the faubourg Saint-Marcel, where the Academy met, and listen to music, which he appreciated à merveille, and to poetry. But, under the King's guidance, the character of the Academy changed, passing from poetry and music to learning; it then would meet twice a week, and experts would discuss some abstruse subject proposed beforehand, such as whether the moral or the intellectual virtues were the better.

This was probably the reason that Remy Belleau dedicated to the King his poems on precious stones. Dorat, too, is full of the King's praises. Ronsard, likewise, is in accord; he, too, foresees a golden age when

*La Paix et les Vertus au monde fleuriront:  
Jupiter et Henry l'univers partiront,*

and predicts that after this life the King will mount to Heaven, and drink nectar at the table of the gods. Philippe Desportes (1546-1600) is another. And here we come upon another side of the King's character. Plutarch's heroes sink below the horizon, the star of Venus rises, and Henri d'Anjou is all for voluptuous ways. Desportes, under the propriety of fantastic names, celebrated the

Prince's amours. The Spanish ambassador wrote to Philip II that the Duc d'Anjou "is always surrounded by women; one holds his hands, another caresses his ears, and in that fashion he passes a great deal of his time." But he seems once to have been really in love, with Marie de Clèves, wife of the Prince de Condé the younger, and sister to the wife of Henry de Guise and to the Duchess of Nevers. However, when he came back from the siege of La Rochelle, on his election to the throne of Poland (1572), the lady had been reconciled to her husband and was on her good behaviour. The poor young man besought her sister, the Duchess of Nevers, to intercede for him:

"Madame," he wrote, "I am more miserable than ever I was, and I beseech you, as you are my friend and know how much I wish to do anything for you, arrange matters according to my needs. I entreat you with tears in my eyes, and my hands clasped. You know what love is. Judge if I deserve to be so treated by your sister. . . . If she treats me with such indignity after the promises she has made me, I shall be so put out with her that the justice of my cause will enable me to break with her forever. I will do anything, I am so wild. I tell you that I cry for hours. Have pity on me."

But when he came back from Poland she was dead. He spent a week sighing and weeping. He put on deep mourning with little death's-heads sewn to the ribbons of his shoes and to the points of his hose, and wore a cross and earrings that had belonged to her. These mementoes, however, his sensible mother speedily removed. Not very long afterwards (February, 1575) he married Louise de Vaudémont, a princess of Lorraine. And now the effeminate side of his character became more and more dominant. One wonders if the murder of Condé and the massacre of Saint Bartholomew exercised some strange transmutation in his inner being, and converted him into a sort of hermaphrodite. He dressed very much like a woman, wore earrings again, arranged his jacket open at the neck, covered his fingers with rings, and paraded

before the Court all sorts of foppish millinery. He gathered about him a band of dissolute young men known as his minions. Much evil, and justly, was said of them, but it should be added that they were courageous. D'Aubigné has left us his opinion concerning the King and these friends.

*Degeneré Henry, hypocrite, bigot!*

...

*Tes prestres par la rue à grandes troupes conduits  
N'ont pourtant pue celer l'ordure de tes nuicts;  
Les crimes plus obscures n'ont pourtant pue se faire  
Qu'ils n'esclattent en l'air aux bouches du vulgaire;  
Des citoyens oisifs l'ordinaire discours  
Est de solenniser les vices de nos Cours*

...

*Le péché de sodome et le sanglant inceste.*

Degenerate Henry, bigot, hypocrite!

...

Your priests, through streets in great troops led,  
Cannot conceal the foulness of your bed.  
The darkest crimes that can be done  
Are bruited on the lips of everyone,  
And tongues of idlers are taught  
To celebrate the vices of the Court

...

"Tis better said than guessed—  
Foul sodomy and sickening incest.

These accusations of d'Aubigné, who as a stout Huguenot is not slow to proffer them, were generally believed, and help account for the dislike and contempt into which the King had fallen. The best known of these gallants are Quélus, Maugiron, Saint-Luc, d'Arques, Saint-Mesgrim—and pre-eminently, for they were the King's special favorites, d'Épernon and Joyeuse, who were made dukes and peers, and were loaded with gifts, offices and honors. You may see in the Louvre a painting of this period that shows a group of lords and ladies dancing a round dance in the centre of



(Photograph by Giraudon)

A ball at the Court of Henri III



a ballroom, the men wearing moustachios and little pointed beards, ruffs, doublet and hose, and the women with great open collars trimmed with lace, stomachers and hooped skirts, while off to one side stands the King, pointing down at one of his little dogs—*petits chiens damerets*—with the Queen and the Queen Mother beside him. He was also subject to a sort of neurasthenia, which affected him emotionally in religious services. He joined a company of penitents—and made his courtiers join him—who marched through the streets clothed in white linen, with lights and sad music, and some beat themselves with thongs till the blood came.

Among his caprices was a taste for dogs, or rather for dogs in great numbers: *chiens de lions*, pugs, and others. The King heard that a gentleman owned two most charming pugs, so he asked to see them and coveted them so much that he made the owner a member of the *Ordre de Saint-Esprit* in order to obtain them. D'Aubigné says he spent more than a hundred thousand crowns a year upon dogs, and that other historians double that sum, and that he owned over a thousand, and took two hundred round with him, each pack of eight having a governess and assistant, and a pack horse, so that two hundred dogs had six hundred horses, at a cost altogether of eight hundred francs a day. He asked the Venetian ambassador to buy a couple of these *chiens de lions*, whiskered and woolly and white, or, if that was not possible, then red and white. And he and his Queen used to drive about the streets of Paris, and of the neighborhood, looking for dogs that they might like.

De Thou, writing years afterwards in calm reflection, says: "This Prince had all the fine qualities of body and mind one could wish for in a great King, a sincere attachment to the religion of his forefathers, much zeal for justice, consummate prudence, a majestic bearing joined to a sweetness and kindness beyond compare. But he was too inclined to effeminacy and pleasure, and this single fault was enough to tarnish all his virtues." It was his weakness for his minions that pulled him down.

## CHAPTER XXXIII

### TRIUMPH OF THE LEAGUE

THE Edict of 1577, like other edicts, proved powerless to exorcise the seven devils of hatred, malice, distrust, envy, pride, deceit and uncharitableness that had made their home in the fair land of France. Historians call the new wars numbers Six and Seven. They are best forgotten, although some names are pleasing: *La Paix de Monsieur*, *La Paix du Roi*, *La Guerre des Amoureux*. Huguenot tradition ascribes, as is most justly due, great cruelty to the Catholics; but let us glance for a moment at what the Calvinists were doing.

In Languedoc, for instance, bands of former Protestant soldiers terrorized the country, pillaging wherever they could; they attacked castles, looted churches, held travellers for ransom. These freebooters lived together very democratically, captains, private soldiers and ministers of the Gospel eating and drinking and robbing together—only the captains seem to have taken most of the booty. Captain Fournier garnered fifty thousand crowns. Captain Noguier, in emulation, “omitted nothing that a cruel, inhuman man can do.” A third “marched to and fro for eight months, murdering, massacring, robbing, pillaging, holding peasants to ransom, and, contrary to all rules of war, holding young ladies to ransom; did more than a hundred thousand crowns’ worth of damage to the country, and shed so much innocent blood that it is incredible that God will not take vengeance.”

The Estates of Languedoc reported that “the earth is wet with the blood of peasants, their wives and children; towns and country houses are deserted, ruined and for the most part burned, and

all since the Edict of Pacification. . . . This is not the work of Tartars or Turks or Muscovites, but done by men born and bred in this province, who profess what is called the Reformed religion, a religion that, by their monstrous wickedness, they render infamous and odious to God and man." And (as d'Aubigné recounts) some of the Huguenot soldiers did not hesitate to attack other Huguenot soldiers, who were escorting Huguenot merchants from the city of La Rochelle to a neighboring fair; and so on. It is a dull story of brutality.

And then, of a sudden, Clio turns a page; and an intelligible drama, with the three Henrys as the chief characters, starts up. One then remembers how the three, as boys, were at the Collège of Navarre together, how they were together at the famous colloquy at Bayonne, how they amused themselves together at Court flirting with Mme de Sauves and other fair ladies, and taking part in all sorts of festivities.

On June 10, 1584, the King's only brother, the Duc d'Alençon, died without issue, and, as the King himself had no children, in spite of passionate pilgrimages made by his wife to Our Lady of Chartres, Henry of Navarre, a heretic, became heir presumptive to the throne. And then, as Davila says, "*Dalle ceneri del Duca d'Alansone tornarono a riaccendersi le favelle già come semimorte della Lega*—from the ashes of the Duc d'Alençon the half-extinguished sparks of the League began to revive and burn afresh." The King's edict against all leagues became a mere scrap of paper, the League grew overnight in favour and in strength; and it was no longer possible for the King to put himself at its head—that office was occupied by Henri de Guise. So the three Henrys stood confronting each other, King of France, King of the League, King of Navarre. The King of France, with his minions, his voluptuous ways, his gross effeminacy, had alienated the affections and the trust of his subjects; his party was weak, his position uncertain, his throne insecure. He had one hope: if he could persuade Navarre to renounce his Calvinistic doctrines and turn Catholic,

he would knock the main prop from under the League, and then he could snap his perfumed fingers at the Duc de Guise. He sent his minion, the Duc d'Épernon, to Pau upon that mission, with a royal escort of more than fifteen hundred horsemen. There were not lacking counsellors who advised Navarre to comply—"better the crown of France than a couple of psalms." But Navarre was wary. He did not dare risk losing the support of his Huguenot army, and he did not dare trust the King. He chose the psalms.

The Guises felt that Fortune was smiling on them, and that they must be ready to take Opportunity by the forelock. They came together—the Duke, his brothers Mayenne and the Cardinal de Guise, his cousins d'Aumale and d'Elbeuf, his kinsmen, Nevers and Mercoeur, the Queen's brother—and agreed that the League must take definite cognizance of the situation, it must declare that a heretic could not inherit the crown, and therefore it must have somebody to put in Navarre's place.

Whatever secret ambitions the Duc de Guise may have nursed in his breast, it was premature to disclose them, and it was beyond cavil that the Bourbons were next in line to the throne. Henry of Navarre was disqualified as a heretic, and that left his father's brother, the Cardinal de Bourbon, an old gentleman of sixty-six, as the constitutional heir. The next step was to secure the support of the great Catholic power, Spain. Henri de Guise had long been on terms of intimacy with King Philip. Both were zealous Catholics, both supported Mary Queen of Scots against England, and both were bitter enemies of the French Huguenots. Years before, the Spanish ambassador had advised King Philip to pension the Duke: "It would be," he said, "a good plan to put the Duke under obligation, taking into consideration his rank, his way of life, his personal qualities, the greatness of his House (for everybody acknowledges him to be the chief man in France), and the fact that he is well disposed to the King of Spain, and has already done things for him, and is a man able, in matters as grave as those likely to arise, to render in a single day benefits that would

outweigh what would be given him in a long course of years." The King liked better to dangle hopes before greedy eyes than to dispense money; but it was believed that he assigned the Duke a pension of fifty thousand crowns. There was nothing in this that transgressed the accepted code of ethics. Coligny and Condé had made treaties with England and taken money from Elizabeth, and, whether unwittingly as they said, or not, had surrendered Havre to her; Henry of Navarre took money from her and considered surrendering Brest.

At any rate, on the last day of the year, December 31, 1584, these Leaguers, in person or by proxy, met ambassadors from King Philip in the great château at Joinville, and entered into a treaty with them. So long as the château existed, a projecting upper chamber on the façade towards the town was pointed out as the place of meeting. It was agreed to maintain the Catholic religion in France, to extirpate heresy, to exclude all heretics from the throne, to acknowledge the Cardinal de Bourbon as the nearest legitimate successor to Henri III, to reform abuses in the Church, to accept and enforce the decrees of the Council of Trent, to renounce all alliance with the Turks, to stop all French depredations upon Spanish commerce, to support Philip against rebels in the Netherlands, and restore to him the city of Cambrai (the one conquest Alençon had made); and Philip promised to support the League with troops and a subvention of fifty thousand crowns a month to pay for the war as soon as it should begin.

This treaty is contrary to modern ethics; but it could hardly have been considered so then; at least there was no one to point the finger of scorn. Rumour said that two weeks earlier (December 15, 1584) at Magdebourg, a treaty had been made between Queen Elizabeth, Henry of Navarre, the Prince de Condé, several German princes, certain Swiss confederations, and the City of La Rochelle, to demand of the King to maintain edicts favorable to the Protestants. Whatever amount of falsity there was in this rumour, the Protestant chiefs were certainly seeking help from Queen Eliza-

beth and any other foreign Protestants who could help them.

The Guises were undoubtedly acting in accordance with the wishes of the great majority of Frenchmen in their resolution to keep a heretic from the throne. In Paris, whether the first impulse came from religious patriots or from Guisards, the burghers, mainly citizens of the middle class, all stout Catholics, terrified by stories of what Protestant rulers had done to Catholics in England, established an association of their own; and, in cities all over France, branches of the League sprang up, in fierce determination to keep a heretic from the throne. Whatever personal ambitions Henri de Guise and his family nourished in their hearts, the power of the movement came from the fear of the Catholic population that their religion would be in danger if a Protestant King came to the throne. By March the organization of the League had been so far completed that the leaders launched a full proclamation of their purposes.

The King was on tenterhooks; he was between the devil and the deep sea. He did not know whether to join the Huguenots and fight the League, or join the League and fight the Huguenots. He shuffled about, and wriggled, but needs must. The League knew its own mind, had force at its back, and the King capitulated. He did what they asked. He revoked all the earlier edicts of pacification; he forbade all exercise of the Protestant religion; ordered its ministers to leave the Kingdom immediately, and its other adherents to apostatise or leave within six months; he declared Protestants incapable of holding any public charge whatever, and demanded the surrender of their cities of safety. He acknowledged that the League had acted from religious zeal. He agreed to pay the wages of the mercenary foreigners hired by the League. He granted as a security to the Cardinal de Bourbon the city of Soissons, with sixty cavalry men and thirty harquebusiers; to the Duc de Guise the cities of Verdun, Toul, Saint-Dizier, with their usual garrisons, also Châlons-sur-Marne with fifty halberdiers; to Mayenne the city of Beaune and the Castle at Dijon; to

d'Aumale, l'Esprit-de-Rue; to d'Elbeuf, the government of Bourbnois, and so forth (Edict of Nemours, July, 1585). It is said that the motives of men are mixed, that their zeal for the good of the commonwealth is usually tempered by an alloy of personal ambition. That may be so; but it would be very unjust to the Guises not to grant that zeal for the traditional Church, for all that they had been taught to hold sacred by their mother, by their old grandmother who had just died, and by all their associations, was the dominant motive of their action. They have been held up to hatred and contempt so long by Protestants, and persons who sympathise with Protestantism, that their religious patriotism is rarely recognized.

This Edict was a terrible blow to the Huguenots. It is said that, when Henry of Navarre heard the news, "the part of his moustache on the side where he had rested his head on his hand turned white almost on the instant."

## CHAPTER XXXIV

### DANGER

THE Edict of Nemours was a promise by the King to the League that he would suppress heresy, and that was tantamount to a promise to make war, for the Huguenots were not of a mind to turn Catholic or to be exiled, ministers and flocks together. And war did come, known as the War of the Three Henrys.

The Protestant world was alarmed; it raised an army to support the Huguenots. Queen Elizabeth and the German Princes helped, and a strong force of Germans and Switzers marched into Champagne, meaning to cross France and join the rebels in the west. The King prepared three armies: one, which he gave to Guise to oppose the foreign mercenaries, and left pitifully weak in men and equipment; the second under his minion, the Duc de Joyeuse, to destroy Henry of Navarre; and the third for himself. His hope was that Joyeuse, with his excellent army, accompanied by all the young Catholic gallants, would defeat Navarre, that the Guises and the foreigners would destroy one another, and he come in to triumph over the surviving invaders. But luck was against him. Joyeuse and his fashionable gallants were routed and slain in the battle of Coutras (October, 1587), the Duc de Guise won victories over the Germans at Vimory and Anneau, and all he himself did was to bid Épernon buy off the Switzers and to send an escort to protect them from attack on their way home. And whom had the King rewarded? Guise? No. He made his worthless favorite Épernon Admiral of France, and also conferred on him the government of Normandy, a post usually given to a member of the royal family or at least to a Prince of the Blood. Nevertheless, the

Duke of Guise had his reward. As Davila, who was there, a boy of twelve at the time, says:

“All conduced to the glory of the Duke. He received unbelievable applause from everyone, particularly from the Parisians; and his name, as immortal, was celebrated by the tongues and pens of all his partisans. . . . The city was filled with pamphlets, political discourses, satirical verses, fabulous tales, that for the most part vilified the name of the Duc d’Épernon and also redounded to the contempt and shame of His Majesty. And, contrariwise, all the streets, all the corners, of Paris resounded with the praises of the Duc de Guise. A thousand writers celebrated him in prose and verse, calling him a new David, a new Moses, liberator of the Catholics, pillar and buttress of the Holy Church. Preachers, in their usual manner but with greater freedom, filled the people’s ears with wonders, with the miracles, so they call them, of this new Gideon, come into the world for the salvation of France. These things flowed out from the city of Paris, and spread over all the provinces, as blood from the heart flows into all the members, until they were endued with the same notions in favor of the League, and to the disadvantage of the King.”

Encouraged by all this, Guise resolved to make the King keep the promises contained in the Edict of Nemours. The King squirmed, he tried to evade, he made what the Duke described as “a world of extraordinary offers, that I can only compare to the temptations that Satan proposed to Our Lord . . . but I am sure that good angels will bear me up and turn aside the evil that my enemies would like to do me.” Then the city of Paris took matters into its own hands; it perfected its organization and made most revolutionary plans. A spy told this to the King, and the King ordered the Maréchal de Biron to bring up the Swiss mercenaries in his pay to Lagny in the neighborhood of Paris. The Parisian Leaguers in great alarm begged the Duke to come into the city

and protect them from the King's soldiers. The King forbade him, but no sooner had the King's envoy gone than the Duke mounted his horse and with a handful of attendants rode post-haste to Paris.

He arrived at Saint-Denis on the night of Sunday, May 8, and the next morning, about noon, rode into Paris by the Porte Saint-Denis. At first he avoided recognition; he pulled down the brim of his hat, and wrapped his cloak round his chin; but, once in the city, a young gentleman of his suite cocked up the Duke's hat and pushed the cloak back, saying gaily it was time to make himself known. He then had but seven in his company, but (I quote Davila) "As a little snowball rolling downhill goes growing so fast that at last it is like a great hill, so now people rushed out of their shops and houses with cheers to follow him, and before he had traversed half the city more than thirty thousand were following him. And so great was the press that he could hardly make his way. The hurrahs rent the sky: never was *Vive le Roi!* shouted so loud as they shouted *Vive Guise!* Salutations, thanks, obeisance came thick on all sides, some kissed the skirts of his cloak; those not near enough to touch, gesticulated with delirium, others adored him as if he were a saint, others touched him with their rosaries and then kissed them and put them to their eyes and foreheads; women showered flowers from the windows and blessed his coming. The Duke, smiling, waved his hand, looked gaily around, spoke flattering words, his head unbonneted, and neglecting no art to win popular applause."

He rode direct to the Hôtel de Soissons (on the site of the Bourse), the Queen Mother's palace built for her sixteen years before by Jean Bullant, and dismounted. The Queen's female dwarf happened to be looking out of a window and saw him, and went and told the Queen that M. de Guise was at the door. The Queen would not believe it, and said the dwarf deserved a whipping for telling a lie. The next moment she discovered it to be true, and was so much disturbed that she was seen to tremble and

change color. The Duke behaved with the greatest deference; and she, not knowing what to say, murmured that she was glad to see him but that she had rather have seen him at some other time. He answered, very quietly but with a proud bearing, that he was the King's loyal subject, and having heard calumnies against himself and that things were being done against religion and against honorable men in the city, he had come to prevent disturbance and exculpate himself, or to give his life for Holy Church and the Commonweal. Then, while he was paying his respects to her ladies-in-waiting, she sent Luigi Davila (a relation of the historian who records this interview), one of her gentlemen, to the King to notify him that the Duke had arrived and that she would soon bring him to the Louvre.

The King was in his cabinet with the Maréchal de Bellièvre, the Abbé d'Elbène and Monsignore Villequier; he was so taken aback by the news that he covered his face and leaned on the table. Then he questioned Davila on every particular, and bade him tell the Queen Mother privily to detain the Duke as long as possible. An Italian colonel, Alfonso Ornano, coming in that moment, the King said: "M. de Guise has just come, although I sent him word not to come. Tell me, Colonel, if you were in my place, and you had sent him an order as I did, and he paid no attention to it, what would you do?" "Sire," he answered, "it seems to me that there is but one question here: do you regard M. de Guise as your friend or your enemy?" The King said nothing except by a gesture that gave the others to understand clearly what he thought. Then the Colonel said, "Sire, I think I understand your Majesty's mind. If that is so, and if you will honor me with this task, without further trouble to yourself I will lay his head at your feet today, or I will put it in whatever place you may please to direct; and if any man stir a finger, it shall be to his own destruction. And for the execution of this, I put my life and my honor in your hands." Abbé d'Elbène approved and quoted *percutiam pastorem et dispergentur oves* (smite the shepherd and the

sheep shall be scattered). But Villequier, Bellièvre and Cheverny, the Chancellor, who came in then, said no, that it would be too dangerous, the people would rise, and the Louvre was not fully prepared for defense.

Meanwhile Catherine de Médicis, who was not very well, got into her sedan chair and, accompanied by the Duke, went to the Louvre and, in order to avoid the array of guards, passed on to the little gate by the tennis court; the Duke, clad in a doublet of white damask, with a cloak of black cloth and boots of buffalo leather, walked on foot, holding in his hand his large hat with a green plume, and bowing right and left while the people cheered *Vive le Duc de Guise!* and women pressed to touch the hem of his garments, crying out they were safe now he had come; some tried to kiss him, and the multitude thronged him, till it seemed that all the city was crowded into the courtyard of the Louvre and in the streets around. When the Queen and the Duke entered, the soldiers drew back, and they passed between the files; the Duke saluted the lines as he went, but M. de Crillon, captain of the guards, gave him only the faintest semblance of a greeting, and it was noticed that at this the Duke's face turned a shade pale; he understood the danger he was in, and the danger became clearer still as he saw files of Switzers, with arms at attention, at the foot of the stairs, and archers in the great hall, and in the antechambers groups of gentlemen.

The Queen Mother and he entered the King's cabinet together. The Duke bowed very low. The King said, with a scowl, "I gave you to understand that you were not to come." The Duke answered, with the same submissiveness he had shown the Queen, and with greater restraint, that he had come to put himself in the hands of His Majesty's justice, to clear himself of the slanders charged by his enemies, and that he would not have come if he had understood definitely that His Majesty forbade him to come. The King turned to Bellièvre, "Isn't it true that you received orders to tell the Duc de Guise not to come, unless he wished to be held

responsible for the insolence and riots of the Parisians?" Bellièvre started to answer, but the King interrupted him with the words "No matter!" and the Duke said that the Queen Mother had bidden him come. She explained, perhaps by agreement between the two on their way to the Palace, that she had fetched him in order to pacify everything and to put him on the same good terms with the King that had always been between them. The Duke asserted that he wished to show his duty to the King, to help quiet the troubles that seemed to menace the city. "I beg Your Majesty, very respectfully, to do me the honor to trust in my loyalty and affection, and not lend a ready ear to the calumnies from those whom Your Majesty knows do not wish me well." The King replied that he was not aware of any calumnies uttered against him, but that it would be clear that he was innocent if no disturbance arose in the city. Then Catherine, knowing her son, and fearful of some rash act, took him aside and told him of the great excitement among the citizens, and counselled him that it was no time for hasty decisions. The Duchess d'Uzès, who stood beside her, urged the same thing. And Guise, anxiously studying the King's face, took advantage of his evident irresolution to protest that he was tired from his journey, and begged leave to withdraw, and went off as quickly as he could.

Meanwhile the crowd outside had begun to be disquieted and restless. Some tried to scale the walls, and one of the Duke's devoted adherents, Captain Saint-Paul, forced his way in, vowing that whatever game was played should not be played without him. When the Duke reappeared the populace again burst into cheers, and escorted him all the way through the streets to the Hôtel de Guise. And during the day and all the next night his friends came in crowds to guard him, filling the mansion, the outbuildings, the courtyard, and the garden, all places.

## CHAPTER XXXV

### WARNINGS

EXCITEMENT became tense. Stealthy steps everywhere. The Louvre, the Hôtel de Guise, the Hôtel de Ville, were all surmises and alarms. The King and the Duke met in the garden behind the Queen Mother's palace; demands, assertions, reproaches, recriminations, promises, passed to and fro. Then the King, frightened by reports that the League had introduced fifteen thousand men into the city, ordered the Maréchal de Biron to bring the Swiss soldiers into Paris. One seems to be anticipating the story of the French Revolution. The Duke was thinking the King would give way and grant his demands; but on Thursday, May 12, an hour before dawn, Maréchal de Biron, with fife and drum, marched the Swiss troops into the city and quartered them at various points. Paris went mad; bells were rung, carts, barrels, stones, beams, every portable object, were heaped together in barricades; angry men assembled; the Swiss detachments were hemmed in by the barricades and shut up, almost in pens. No food, no drink, no ammunition, nothing could be brought to them. The King had given orders not to fire; and now it was too late. With prospect of a general massacre, the King was forced to send to the Duke of Guise, begging him to rescue his soldiers. It was the very base note of humility. The Duke acquiesced; he rode out with neither sword nor armor and released the penned-in troops, bade the victorious citizens give back their weapons taken from them, and suffer them to retire within the precincts of the Louvre. The next day the King sent the Queen Mother to see the Duke. The old lady, in her litter, had to stop at each barricade until a passage was

made, and then the opening was closed again behind her. She held a long confabulation with the Duke, and while she was there the King, attended by a few courtiers, started out into the Tuileries gardens as he usually did, but kept on to the orchard beyond and to the royal mews, mounted in hot haste and rode out of the new gate there, and down the road towards Chartres, a passion for revenge in his heart.

But the King was powerless, and the Queen Mother helped to bring the rivals together. The King accepted the situation; he promised never to let a heretic reign, he forgave all who had taken part in the barricades, he confirmed the officials who had been substituted by the Leaguers in place of his, he dismissed Épernon, and appointed the Duc de Guise Lieutenant-General of his armies.

He also convoked the States-General, for the League wished to have the formal support of the representatives of the nation. The elections were entirely in favor of the League; the Clergy chose the Cardinal de Bourbon and the Cardinal de Guise as their presidents; the Noblesse Maréchal de Bissac, a hero of the barricades; and the Third Estate, La Chapelle-Marteau, a stout Leaguer. There is no doubt that the general sentiment was strongly in favor of the League. One deputy to the Third Estate said to the King: "Sire, your France used to be the house of God, the congregation of His Church, in which dwelt that wise and chaste mistress, the Catholic Religion, Apostolic and Roman, sole wife without spot or wrinkle, who was not smirched by the insults, impudence and effrontery of heretical opinions. But now churches are ruined, worship is nullified, sacraments are profaned, and the fear of God is falling away day by day." At a later meeting the speaker for the Noblesse asserted that religion is the bond, the ornament, the strength of everything; and therefore, when there is a question of what is so holy and desirable, we ought to forsake all things else in order to preserve it, and acknowledge only those animated by the same desire as our fellow countrymen." He honored the obligations of a gentleman—the protection of the old,

of widows and children, of the humble, of peaceable citizens, of the King's Majesty and of his family—and yet, he said, "these matters do not stir a virtuous heart so much as does a higher, a celestial, good, the very top of all duties, the obligation for the defense of the Faith." And the orator for the Third Estate added, "Kings carry scepters solely to be ministers of the glory of God, defenders of His name, protectors of His religion." There is no doubt that preservation of the Catholic religion was the first desire and purpose of the League and of the Duc de Guise.

The Château of Blois stands on a hill above the town. The delegates followed the winding road and entered the courtyard by the portal of the Gothic wing, so gay with dormer windows, corbels and porcupines, and the statue of Louis XII, and then, turning to the right entered the great assembly hall, at the angle between this wing and the Renaissance wing of François I. The hall, a hundred feet long and fifty high, was richly decorated, the walls hung with tapestries and the columns covered with violet velvet strown with fleurs-de-lys, the gallery garnished with curtains, and in the centre a dais with thrones for the King, the Queen and the Queen Mother. Round about royalty were grouped Princes of the Blood, Cardinals, officers of the King's guards in brilliant colors, but the cynosure of all eyes was a tall handsome aristocrat, thin and pale from his labors and his wounds, with his hair, though he was but thirty-eight, white on the temples, who as Lord High Steward (*Grand-Maître*) sat near the foot of the throne. He was dressed in white satin, with his black velvet cloak, embroidered with silver and pearls, thrown back, and round his neck the collar of the Order of Saint-Michel.

The King showed spirit, and opened the session with an eloquent speech. But things did not go well. The King felt himself thwarted, and believed that opposition came from the Duc de Guise; and rumours flitted about that the Guises meant to follow the example of the Mayors of the Palace in dealing with the last of the Merovingians.

Everything pointed to an outbreak. It was obvious that the Duke and not the King held the real scepter. Estienne Pasquier wrote to a friend that "the principal deputies visit the Duke day and night, and when they don't go, they learn his wishes by intermediaries . . . so that they speak only through his mouth, and no business is proposed except what has been examined in his council, and it seems as if the meeting at Blois was merely to set the seal on a new royalty." Marshals and captains of the guards went to his quarters, and messengers and couriers came to him from all over France. The Duke's friends began to be apprehensive. Even before the States-General met, his mother, Mme de Nemours, told De Thou that she was troubled about this meeting, and wished that her sons did not have to go. The Parisians gave the Duke a coat of mail covered with taffeta, and begged him to wear it when he went to see the King. And whispers of danger echoed about: "M. de Guise thinks that he and the King are reconciled, but no, no, no, the Day of the Barricades will not go unpunished." Letters of warning came from Paris and Orléans, and from various persons and places. He answered: "My dear friends, I thank you. Please continue your good will. I hope that God will help us, because we are here in this place to do good work, and that He will not permit the evil counsels that the King receives to prevail."

He took precautions, however. He wrote to Mendoça: "There is no lack of warnings from all sides that there is to be an attempt on my life; but, thanks be to God, I have made provision, and I have so many friends, and by money and presents have won over so many of those whom they would use for the deed, that, if they begin, I shall finish more roughly than I did in Paris on the Day of the Barricades." And he said to a soldier who told him that the King was plotting against him, "I have no doubt of it, and if I had the heart of a rabbit I should have fled long ago." And back in November the Duke, meeting the wife of Maréchal de Retz, said to her, speaking of the King: "I have just seen my man, and I have

been leading him up and down in an extraordinary fashion." "That is not so well," she answered, "in my judgment you do a good deal too much. I fear that some catastrophe will come of it, on you and on us." "I am not afraid of him," the Duke said, "I know him well, he is too much of a coward." "That is what would put me more on my guard," she answered, "a brave man would not act so quickly." Other friends, Beauvais-Mangis and Schomberg, pleaded with him; they represented the King's jealousy, saying he said that the Duke had virtually usurped his place and lorded it over the assembled deputies. The Duke answered that he was not acting in his own interest but in that of the Catholic religion. And he was equally impassive when they bade him remember how he was overwhelmed with debts and that without him his wife and children would be in a wretched state. "After all," he said, "I don't see that it would be so easy to surpass me. I don't know of a man on earth, who, put face to face with me, would not halve the fear; and I go about so well attended that it is not easy for a great number to attack me without finding me on my guard. My suite accompanies me, every day, to the door of the King's chamber, and if they heard the slightest noise, neither guard nor doorkeeper could prevent them from running to my assistance."

Nevertheless, so many deputies and others became concerned that he consulted his friends. A number were strong for his going away, but the Archbishop of Lyons, in whose judgment he had great confidence, advised him to stay—he would be leaving his friends and his departure would create trouble—adding, "He that quits the game loses." M. d'Esmandreville retorted to the Archbishop: "You speak as if the King were a wise and sensible man, who considers everything, and you don't see that he is a madman, who thinks of nothing but doing what the two cowardly passions of hatred and fear, which overmaster him, may put into his head, and would not think of the considerations that you say would affect a reasonable man."

Finally the Duke decided to stay. He said that he was sick to death of the daily slanders uttered against him, and that if he went he would give occasion to his enemies to say that he had broken up the States-General in order to prevent a satisfactory settlement of the Kingdom—he had rather risk his life than give them such a pretext; and, taking the Archbishop by the hand, he said, “My friend, I am determined not to go, lest my going should do hurt to the Kingdom. If death comes in by yonder door, I will not go out by the window.” And when his cousin the Duc d’Elbeuf came late in the evening, a day or two before the murder, and found him writing despatches, and begged him to think of avoiding plots contrived against him, he answered: “In order to reap the harvest that will spring from the good disposition of the States-General, if it is necessary, I will lose my life. I have long made up my mind to it. If I had a hundred lives I would devote them all to the service of God, and His church, and to the relief of the poor people for whom I have the greatest compassion.” Then he tapped d’Elbeuf on the shoulder and said “Go to bed,” and, putting his hand over his heart, added, “Here is the protection of innocence.”

The King, on his part, showed himself more friendly and conciliatory. When someone referred to the suspicions flying about, he broke in: “I know what belongs to the freedom and security of the States-General. You must trust my word. It is a crime to be suspicious of one’s King. These rumours come from those that have no love for me and wish to render me odious to the people. No cause for disturbing the States-General will ever come from me.” The historian De Thou says that the King’s hypersensitive temperament was out of kilter in winter time. At other seasons he was easy to deal with, but in the winter he was impossible. He eschewed all diversions, went to bed late, slept little, got up early, and worked like a beaver all day. In such periods he was very severe for the maintenance of discipline. His Chancellor, Cheverny, who had known him from childhood, told De Thou, not long before the meeting of the States-General, about the humours

of the King, and predicted that if the Duke continued to press him so, some day he would have him quietly murdered in his room, for this was the season when he lost his temper easily and his anger bordered on madness.

And then there reached the King's ears a story that the Duke meant to take him to Paris and to depose him. Other stories added details: the Guises had a family dinner party, at which the Cardinal de Guise toasted Henry de Guise as King of France, and added that the present King should go into a monastery, where he would make an excellent monk. "Yes," interrupted their sister, Mme de Montpensier, "you shall hold his head and I'll take my scissors and cut his tonsure."

The shallow cup of the King's patience overflowed. Davila says that on the night of December 18 the King consulted several friends as to whether the Duke should be arrested or killed, and three against one declared for assassination. The King assented. He said a wild boar caught in the toils might prove stronger than the cords, but that a dead man makes no further trouble.

Another chronicler, a deputy from Comminges, Captain Baptiste de Lamezan, has left an account of a meeting on the night of Tuesday, December 20—how the King called into his cabinet, on the second story of the palace, a group of soldiers from Guyenne and Gascony most devoted to him. Lamezan was one of these. The King said to him, "Well, Seigneur de Lamezan, what are you up to?" Lamezan replied "Beau Sire, these babblers keep me from sleeping, were I of a mind to." "Well, as long as you are not asleep, tell me what I ought to do." The answer came immediately: "Have those two traitors (meaning the Duke and the Cardinal) come into this room, and kill them on entry." "Don't you think, M. de Lamezan, that I should be called a Nero?" "It has nothing to do with Nero," Lamezan answered. "If you don't kill them, they will kill you, and they are the stronger. You cannot have them arrested and tried, and yet you are the supreme

judge in the Kingdom. Those rascals in the Parlement are all traitors, either for the League or for the Huguenots. . . . The Guises are guilty of high treason. Say the word, and they shall be killed." The King left him, walked about, spoke to several others, and came back, and asked, "Who will rid me of these wicked Guises, if they come here?" Lamezan answered promptly, "Men without fear, Sire, the thirty-three Gascons of my cousin Thémines' company." And so, Lamezan says, "It was done, and I think my nephew De Touges was not the last to strike."

These thirty-three, no doubt, were Gascons of the band *Les Quarante Cinq*, whom Dumas père made so famous. Still there had to be a chief. The King selected the *maitre de camp* of his guard, the Chevalier de Crillon, a man, according to Davilla, ferocious and bold (*feroce e ardito*). He had him come, and explained his plan; it was the only way he had, he said, to save his own life, and he had chosen him to execute it. Crillon replied: "Sire, I am your servant, you have my loyalty and my devotion, but I am a soldier by profession and a gentleman. If you wish me to challenge the Duc de Guise, and fight him man to man, I am ready to do so on the instant. But to be executioner, to carry out a death sentence, does not become a man such as I am, and I never will do it." The King knew Crillon to be a plain blunt man, who spoke out his thoughts. So he merely bade him say nothing, and, after consideration, decided upon one of the gentlemen of his chamber, M. de Laugnac, who by his elegance and agreeable manners was raising himself to a place among the minions. Laugnac made no difficulties, and promised that, with the aid of some of the Forty-five, he would carry out the task.

It happened that at this time the Mayor of Bourges, François le Mareschal, came to see the King, bringing letters from the Duc de Nevers. He went to the château in the morning of December 21, and saw the King come from his room in company with the Duc de Guise and others. The King, perceiving the Mayor, called

him up, and took his arm as far as the gate of the garden, and talked to him while waiting for the key to be brought. Then the Duc de Guise and the King walked into the garden and went on talking, and Le Maréchal and others followed. They could hear the Duke speak with great affection to the King, and the King return most gracious answers to all he said. The Duke often removed his hat, and the King as often obliged him to replace it. Le Maréchal says that, since then, he had been told that the Duke begged the King to permit him to resign the office of lieutenant-general, on the ground "that the grant had raised up many enemies against him, and caused his ill-wishers to utter slanders, although his only purpose was to serve him loyally."

Another narrative states that on that same morning the Duke went to the King and said he had heard that the King looked on him with ill will, and that the King replied, "Dear Cousin, do you think my soul so wicked as to nurse ill will towards you? On the contrary, I assure you that there is not a person in my Kingdom whom I love better than you, nor one to whom I am more bounden, as I shall make plain by my actions very soon." And he swore it by Our Lord's body, which he was to receive that day, and by many other oaths. The Duke accepted the King's assurances, and that very evening, when the Cardinal de Guise repeated to him that he had it on good authority that the King meant to do him a bad turn, he answered that he could not believe the King was so wicked as to wish him ill.

Other stories are different, and report that when Guise wished to lay down his office of Lieutenant-General, high words passed between them, the cause being that the King suspected that Guise meant to ask the States-General to confer the office of Constable upon him, and that when the King returned to his room he flung his cap on the floor in a fury. The next morning, December 22, the two met in the Queen Mother's room, where she lay abed, ill with gout, having taken medicine. The King made a great



*(Photograph by Giraudon)*

Louis de Bérenger, Sieur de Gast



demonstration of good will and intimacy by bits of jovial talk, and offered the Duke comfits from his box, and took from the Duke's box. He also spent much of the afternoon with him, and that evening at parting said: "Cousin, we have much business on our hands that must be finished before the end of the year. Please be at the Council tomorrow morning early, and we will take it up."

## CHAPTER XXXVI

### THE CHATEAU OF BLOIS

FOUR months before this, before the Duke had left Paris, the Spanish ambassador, Bernardino de Mendoça, had written to the King of Spain:

[August 9, 1588]

“As the Duke had asked me to come to see him before he left, I went to see him by night. He told me that he was starting for Blois and was determined to expose himself to the dangers that might result, rather than incur the suspicion of weakness or timidity. Besides, one should not exaggerate the risk. The retinue he took with him, and the friends he was sure to meet at court, constituted forces superior to those of his enemies and put him in a position to face all open attempts against his person. The only real danger lay in the King’s chamber, where one went in alone and the King had every facility to have him attacked and killed by a dozen or twenty men placed for the purpose. But he thought this danger little to be feared, for it hardly seemed possible to make all the arrangements for such a project without something transpiring, and, beyond all question, if the conspiracy existed, he would be told by some of his personal friends whom he had about the King.”

Many of the Duke’s friends entertained apprehensions, so the King was made to swear on the sacraments perfect reconciliation with the Duke, and friendship, and oblivion of all past quarrels. He took the oaths with every appearance of willingness, and then

playfully declared, not without a touch of irony, that he had decided to hand the government over to the Queen Mother and the Duke, and be wholly free to dedicate his life to prayer and penitence.

So the Duke went on his predetermined way. He had done the duty imposed upon him by honor and filial piety, he had killed the Admiral. Now he must extirpate heresy. The weak, voluptuous, fanatical King never would; he himself must have the power to do it. And with this obsessing task before him, he became fatalistic. All warnings were thrown away upon him. Sometimes he affected to trust the King, sometimes he asserted that he was not afraid. "If it be now, t'is not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come; the readiness is all." He had had a duty laid upon him of infinite complexity, requiring negotiations, diplomacy, intrigue, conspiracy, war, revolt, civil strife; and he was glad at the bottom of his heart to have the matter over, one way or another.

On the night of the twenty-first, the papal legate sent an officer to him, while he was eating supper with the Archbishop of Lyons under a pergola in the faubourg de la Rose, and begged him to leave Blois. On the night of the twenty-second his mother besought him with tears for the love of God not to go to the King's room; he put her off. And at supper, a note of warning—"Take care, they are about to do you a bad turn"—was wrapped in his napkin. He wrote at the foot, "He would not dare," and tossed it on the floor. So Fate stalked on.

The King had been very minute in his preparations. He announced that on Friday morning (December 23) he was going to a house in the neighborhood, and wished to hold his Council meeting very early in the morning. With that excuse, he took the keys of the château from Guise, who had custody of them as *grand-maître*, and bade his carriages be ready at the château by four o'clock. His other preparations were secret. He ordered Larchant, captain of his bodyguard, to station the guards on the

great stairway, and tell the Duke that this was to enable them to hand in a petition for belated pay. He placed other guards by a small interior stair that led from the first story to the second, where the royal apartments were; and ordered that as soon as the Council had met, all doors should be locked. The Forty-five were to be in the *Galerie des Cerfs*, on the first floor, by five o'clock. And the King himself was to be awakened at four.

The alarm clock of the gentleman-in-waiting, M. du Helde, rang faithfully. Du Helde went to the royal bedroom, on the second floor, and knocked. Mlle de Piolant, the first lady of the bedchamber, went to see who it was. "Tell the King it is four o'clock," Du Helde said. "He is asleep and so is the Queen," she answered. "Wake him up, I have my orders, or I'll knock so hard that I shall wake them both." But the King was not asleep; "What is it?" he asked. "It's M. du Helde, who says it is four o'clock." "Piolant," he said, "fetch me my slippers, my wrapper and my candle," and he got up and went into the room known as the new cabinet. Two of his gentlemen were there already; others soon followed, about a dozen. At five o'clock M. de Bellegarde was sent down to see if the Forty-five had come. He reported, not all; but soon going again he found all but two or three, and he put them in the room next to the new cabinet.

The Château de Blois at that time was arranged in this way: the King's apartments were on the second floor, and to reach that floor one had to go up from the courtyard by the glorious outside stairway, or by a small winding stair, next what is now the Gaston d'Orléans wing, which led from the *Galerie des Cerfs* on the first floor in to a room by the corner tower, and from this corner room a door opened into the King's room (*le chambre du Roy*), and from the *chambre du Roy* a door opened into the *cabinet neuf*. Here in this *chambre du Roi* the members of the Forty-five were placed. The King came in and told them that he would soon have need of them, and wished them to promise to do what they were told. All protested their devotion. Then Belle-

garde came in with eight daggers, and asked who wanted them. The eight men nearest received them. Later some twenty went into the *cabinet neuf*, and the King explained what he wanted. One of the Gascons, tapping his hand on the King's chest, said, "*Cap de Diou, Sire, iou bous rendrai mort!* By God's head, Sire, I'll kill him for you." The King then, for further precaution, hid them on the third story in cells prepared for monks.

It was still dark when two priests, the King's chaplain and almoner, arrived; they went into the oratory just beyond the *cabinet neuf*, to the east. The hours went by. It was now seven o'clock. The King sent those of his Council who were with him into the Council chamber (a large room between the *chambre du Roy* and the château wall on the courtyard side), which was reached by the outside stair. He brought the assassins down from their third-story cells, bidding them make no noise, on account of the Queen Mother, whose room was underneath, and placed the eight with daggers in the *chambre du Roy*, and a dozen others, with swords, in a room known as the old cabinet, on the courtyard side of the palace, and reached by a door from the *chambre du Roy*. The old cabinet had had another door leading into the Council chamber, but the King had had that blocked up. Some others of the Forty-five were placed to guard access to the old cabinet from the winding stairs that led up from the *Galerie des Cerfs*. All entrances and exits were guarded.

The Duke was lodged in the château, perhaps in the west wing, torn down by Gaston d'Orléans. Persons, whom Davila calls *i suoi malevoli* (Surgeon Lejeune, passing the gossip on to Dr. Miron, and so on) say that he spent his last night with Madame de Sauves. This lady was a fashionable coquette who, according to Margot, Henry of Navarre's wife, was a very Circe, and at one time had made all the young men fall in love with her, Navarre, Alençon, Seigneur de Gast, and others, Henri de Guise among them. That was fourteen years before, and it seems likely that Lejeune, Miron and the rest echoed old gossip, more especially

as the gossip gives an account of her begging him not to go to the Council meeting, and of his humming a popular song as he mocked her solicitude. It savours of Benjamin Backbite and such gossipmongers. Pierre de l'Étoile says: "Such reports are not believed by people that know the private life of this Prince." At any rate he was awakened at four o'clock by the noise of the King's horses, which the coachmen were making fast to stanchions in the courtyard. He went to sleep again, and between six and seven got up and dressed in light-gray satin.

It was a horrid day, dark, comfortless, and raining hard. He went, accompanied by his secretary Péricard, to the chapel across the court, to say his prayers; but the chapel was not open, so he said them outside, and then went to pay his respects to the Queen Mother. On the way, again he was warned. He answered, "My dear fellow, I was cured of that apprehension long ago." An old servant of his also came up and said the same thing. The Duke told him he was a fool, but added, "He is well guarded whom God guards." The Queen Mother had taken medicine and could not see him, so he proceeded to the great stairway in order to go up to the Council room. Here he came upon Larchant and his archers, who said they were there with a petition for pay, and asked the Duke to further it. The Duke replied, "I will do all I can for you." One of them trod on his foot as a last warning, but it was too late; the Duke went into the Council hall. Larchant cleared the stairway of all lackeys, pages and attendants, and the castle gates were strictly watched. Four others of the Council were already there, and soon the Cardinal of Guise, who lodged in the Hotel d'Alluye, arrived in obedience to a special summons from the King, as well as the Archbishop of Lyons and several more.

They stood or sat in little groups, talking. The Archbishop asked Guise where the King was going so early in such bad weather? The Duke answered, "I suppose he is going into retreat for a few days, as he usually does." Then the Duke, having had

nothing to eat and feeling faint, asked Péricard to fetch his gilded shell, in which he kept Damascus raisins, all that he was used to eat for breakfast. Péricard went, but time passed and he did not return, so the Duke asked the King's *valet de chambre* to give him something or other that the King might have, and the valet brought him some Brignoles plums. And then his own box was handed him by the doorkeeper, who had received it from Péricard, as Larchant's archers had not allowed Péricard to pass. Alarmed by this, Péricard happened at that moment to catch sight of the Duke's son, the young Prince de Joinville, who was hurrying to the apartment of M. Charles de Valois (an illegitimate member of the family); for the King, in his superabundant caution, had arranged that the two young fellows should play racquets that morning, and his nephew was to keep Joinville away till he received word from the King. Joinville hurried on; but Péricard detained Pescher, a gentleman of the Prince's suite, and besought him to get the Duke out of the Council chamber. But Pescher was not allowed to go in. The Duke, meanwhile, began to wonder why his secretary did not return, and sent another doorkeeper to find him and bring him in. Then, feeling chilly, he walked to the fireplace, and sitting in the corner of it, bade a servant build up the fire. "I'm cold," he said, "my heart feels queer; make a fire." His nose began to bleed, and he felt in his hose for a handkerchief, but could not find one, and said, "My people have neglected my necessaries today, but they are excusable—they were in such a hurry." Then he turned to François Hotman, Treasurer of Savings, and said: "My dear Treasurer, will you be so kind as to see if there is any page or valet of mine at the door, and send him to fetch me a handkerchief." Some thought afterwards this was a ruse to get into communication with friends outside. The King's valet sent for a handkerchief, and then the business before the Council began.

In the meantime the King walked up and down in the greatest disquiet. He could not sit still. He would appear at the door of

his cabinet and talk to those of the Forty-five present, bidding them stay in the room, and take care not to be hurt by the Duke, who was big and strong, for he should greatly regret it. He sent a gentleman to the two priests in the oratory to get on their knees and pray God for the success of a deed that he meant to do for the good of the Kingdom. The priests suspected something, and one of them peeked through the tapestry hung in front of the door, and saw Laugnac and Gast talking together; Gast held a dagger, which he dropped and then picked up, and they agreed that as soon as *he* entered they must rush upon him, stab him and throw his body out of the window. The priests did not know who *he* was, but guessed it might be the Duc de Guise. The King felt easier after both brothers were in the Council room, and when the clock stood near eight he bade his Secretary of State, Revol, go call the Duke and say that the King was waiting for him in the old cabinet. Revol went to the door between the King's chamber and the Council room, but came back quite pale. "My God!" the King exclaimed, "what's the matter? How white you are! You will spoil all. Rub your cheeks." Revol replied, "Nothing serious, Sire. M. de Nambu will not let me go by without direct word from your Majesty." So the King called from the door of his cabinet to let Revol pass, and to let the Duc de Guise come in, but all alone.

At that minute the members of the Council were seated round the table, according to their rank, and M. Pétremol, Director of Finance, had laid on the table a financial statement prepared in his office with the assistance of the Archbishop of Lyons, and had begun to explain the second article in it, when the Maréchal de Retz and Cardinal de Gondi raised an objection. Pétremol's exposition did not satisfy them, and everybody was glad to have the Archbishop of Lyons take the paper from Pétremol and answer the objections himself. At that juncture Revol came in and said to the Duc de Guise, "The King asks for you; he is in the old cabinet," and disappeared like a flash, and the Duke got up so

quickly that he tipped his chair over backwards. He put some of the Brignoles dried plums in his comfit-box, and tossed the rest of them on the table saying, "Won't you have some, gentlemen?" Then, fumbling with his cloak, he adjusted it over his left arm, and holding his comfit-box and handkerchief in his left hand, his hat in his right, he bowed, said "Good-bye, gentlemen," knocked at the door of the King's chamber and went in. The eight Forty-fivers were there, with their daggers under their cloaks, some sitting, one leaning on the mantelpiece. On the Duke's entrance all stood up, touched their caps and bowed; and as he turned leftwards to go towards the old cabinet, they followed, as if out of respect. At the door into the old cabinet the Duke lifted the tapestry with his left arm, and stooped, as the door was low, and entered the little passage that led through a very thick wall (once the outer wall) into the old cabinet, and then saw others of the Forty-five waiting for him.

He understood then that there was an ambuscade, turned back and looked at those following him. His look was so high, and he was so feared, that for a moment they hesitated, then threw themselves upon him. Some seized his arms, others his legs, others struck with their daggers. One drove his into the Duke's throat, crying, "Traitor, that will kill you." The Duke made a terrible effort; he shouted, "Ho, friends!" and shaking his arms free flung four to the ground, hitting one in the face with his comfit-box. He tried to draw his sword, but could not draw it more than half from the scabbard, which was well for the assailants, as one of them said, though they were eight resolute men and he taken by surprise. And though his sword was caught in his cloak and his legs held, he dragged them to and fro, and when he caught one with *ses mains fortes et généreuses* he dashed him against the wall. But he wore no corselet, and the daggers did their work—one gash in the neck, one in the chest, one over his eye, one in the loins, four in the belly. Then the assassins drew back. With arms wide out, his eyes lustreless, his mouth open, as if already dead, the Duke

advanced towards Laugnac, who pointed his sword towards him, and, just touching him with the blade sheathed, pitched him to the foot of the King's bed, where he stained the wall with his blood and sank, murmuring, "Have mercy, O God!" and slowly died.

What took place then is all confusion. The King appeared from the new cabinet, a drawn sword in his hand, and exclaimed: "My God; how big he is! He seems to be even bigger dead than alive." Some say he kicked the body, and bade Beaulieu, one of the Secretaries of State, to see what he had on his person. Some of the assassins tore off his earrings, and a diamond ring from his finger. So ended the Great Duke.

## CHAPTER XXXVII

### THE AFTERPIECE

OTHER details of the King's plan were promptly carried out. Guards rushed about the palace to take their stand in front of doors where the Duke's friends lodged. In the Council room the noise of the scuffle had been heard. The Archbishop of Lyons shook the door of the King's chamber; but on the instant archers filed in and arrested him and the Cardinal de Guise. One after another, the chiefs of the League were made prisoners. A soldier was set at old Cardinal de Bourbon's door, where he lay sick in bed; another laid hold of young Joinville, who had been lured away by the King's nephew. Other soldiers appeared at the hall in the town where the Third Estate had met, arrested the officials appointed by the League, and marched them off through the pouring rain to the castle. In the oratory the two priests learned for sure of the Duke's death. One cried out, "O Jesus! what a misfortune!" "Ha!" the King exclaimed, "What's that he said? Is he a Leaguer?" But he appeared *si outré de contentement*, so overcome with satisfaction, that they really had no need to fear. And when M. de Beauvais-Mangis came in, the King cried: "Beauvais, I can say now that I am King." Beauvais-Mangis answered, "I pray to God, Sire, that all may turn out to your satisfaction." And then tears came into his eyes. The King demanded, "What, you are crying?" He answered: "Sire, Your Majesty knows that I have no other aim or interest than to serve you, but pity for what I see [the Duke lay dead beside them] and the evil that I foresee draw tears from my eyes." The King said: "I will set everything to rights."

The King then went down the stairs to tell his mother. On the way he met the Florentine ambassador, who turned back with him and witnessed the interview.

"He went up to her," the ambassador reports, "with a very calm and confident expression on his face. 'Good morning, Madam, I beg you to forgive me. M. de Guise is dead; we shan't hear more of him, I have had him killed, doing no more than forestalling the similar plan he had formed against me. I could endure his insolence no longer. I tried to bear with it in order not to dip my hands in blood; I put from my memory the injury done me on May 13, the Friday when he forced me to fly from Paris; I also forgot that he had plotted against my life, my honor and my power. But, as I knew, as I had continuous proofs, that he was undermining and threatening—those are his own expressions —my authority, my life and my Kingdom, I resolved on this deed, which I have long considered in my mind, asking myself whether I should do it or not. However, as I saw that my patience turned to my shame and dishonor, and that his offenses and perfidies multiplied every day, I was finally inspired and helped by God, to whom I am going now to render thanks in church, at the holy office of Mass. And if any member of the League, whosoever, shall speak to me of what has been done, I will treat him as I did M. de Guise. I wish to alleviate the burdens of my people, I wish to hold meetings of the States-General, but I wish them to speak as subjects and not as sovereigns. I have no enmity against the family and house of M. de Guise; I shall help, and show favor to, the Dukes of Lorraine, Nemours, Elbeuf, and Mme de Nemours, who I know are loyal and well-disposed towards me. But I mean now to be King and no longer a captive and a slave, as I have been from May 13 to this hour, when I begin anew to be King and master. I have put guards about the Prince de Joinville, and the Dukes of Nemours and Elbeuf, and Mme de Nemours, not to harm them but for my own safety. I have done the same towards the Cardinal de Guise, the Archbishop of Lyons, and my cousin,

the Cardinal de Bourbon; I shall do him no harm, but I shall so deal with him that he will not be able to hurt me. I shall pursue ardently the war against the Huguenots, for I wish to extirpate heresy from my Kingdom.' And then he added, 'So, Madam, I am now sole King of France, without a partner.' She answered: 'My son, what do you think you have accomplished? May God grant that you profit by it.' " And some say she said: "My son, you have cut well, but now comes sewing the seam [*C'est bien taillé, mais il faut coudre*]."

The King then left, and she asked to be carried to old Cardinal de Bourbon. He was under guard, in bed, and ill; when he saw her he cried out with tears in his eyes, "Ah, Madam, this is your doing, this is the result of your cozenage. You are the cause of all our deaths." She answered violently, "I pray God to damn my soul, if ever I counselled it. Oh, no! There is sorrow in my heart beyond belief, I shall die of it." And she went back. "I can't bear more. I must to my bed." She lived twelve days more.

Meanwhile upstairs the body of the murdered Duke had been dragged into the King's *garde-robe*. A servant asked the two priests in the oratory if they would like to see the body, and showed it to them, wrapped in a cloth and covered with a Turkey rug. One priest recited a *De profundis* for the dead man's soul, and a surgeon, all in tears, was examining the wound, when another servant came to tell the priest that the King wished to hear Mass in the chapel, and he must go and officiate. There was the King, "*Sa traistre face riante*, as if he had conquered the world."

"This is [as a friend of the Guises said] the abominable detestable deed, the frightful harvest that one could expect to reap from this accursed Henry, atheist and parricide, who perjured himself traitorously, cowardly and vilely, and made his rogues and villains murder the prop, the pillar, the support of our holy religion, of his Kingdom and of himself, his Court and of all France, who, by his prowess, vigor, valor and virtues, rendered her redoubt-

able and fearful to all the most potent and warlike nations. O France! What honors, what praises, what marble monuments, what jewels and precious stones should you lay on his grave, and by this last duty eternalize the memory of him, who, while he lived, lived only for you, and dying cared only for your repose! The most honorable tomb that you can erect to this holy martyr is to imitate his piety, his constancy, his holy determination to die for the preservation of religion, for the liberty of the nation, and the repose of *la Patrie*, so that his sacred zeal may be engraven everlasting on the hearts of all true Frenchmen and of all good men."

His brother the Cardinal de Guise was stabbed to death in a garret of the castle the next day, Christmas Eve. An anonymous poet echoed the sentiments that I have just quoted:

*Ne taillez plus de tombeaux magnifiques  
À ces deux corps, en cendre consommés;  
Car c'est assez, puisqu'ils sont inhumés  
Dedans les coeurs de tous les Catholiques.*

Carve no more monuments magnificent  
For these two bodies, by fire to ashes turned,  
It is enough that in the faithful hearts  
Of all true Catholics they are inurned.

The Duke, however, had not striven and struggled in vain. It was through his efforts, more than by those of any other man, that France was kept a member of Latin Christendom—that her feet, following the main traditions that had come down through the Christian Church from Rome and Athens and Jerusalem, walked in the sanctified path of Roman Catholic civilization.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII

### EPILOGUE

WITH the death of the great Duke, the lesser ambition of the House of Guise—to sit upon the throne of France—passed out of reach, but the greater ambition—to keep *la Patrie* true to its ancient religious faith—was still achievable.

On hearing the news Paris—*la ville des pensées généreuses*, as Anatole France calls her—broke out in open rebellion. It organized a revolutionary government, it appointed Guise's cousin, the Duc d'Aumale, Governor, and shrieked denunciations: "Cry out against this mad wolf, this raging tiger! Let all the corners of the earth hear how an accursed perjurer, murderer, parricide, assassin, Henry of Valois, formerly King of France, has forced his kind and loyal people to revolt against him." Seventy doctors of the Sorbonne solemnly declared: "*Quod populus hujus regni solutus est et liberatus a sacramento fidelitatis et obedientiae praefato Henrico regi praestito*—The people of this Kingdom are released and freed from the oath of loyalty and obedience taken to the aforesaid Henry." And every day there were religious processions, priests, men, women and children, barefoot, to the Church of Sainte-Geneviève, sometimes to the number of four or five thousand persons. Mayenne was appointed Lieutenant-General of the Kingdom, and towns and villages all over joined the *Sainte-Union*.

The King saw his power falling away, he fled from Blois to Tours for safety. There was but one resource, the help of the heir apparent, the heretic King of Navarre. The two Kings came to an agreement, united their forces, and the followers of legiti-

mate royal authority, combined with the hardy, experienced Huguenot soldiers, marched victoriously up to the walls of Paris. It seemed that nothing but the intervention of Providence could save the city and the cause. Prayers, ardent and passionate, went up to Heaven. The spirit of fanatical martyrdom entered into a young Jacobin monk, Jacques Clément, who appeared to some a celestial being, to others a goblin damned. This monk murdered Henri de Valois (August 1, 1589), and Henry of Navarre, a heretic, became, according to Salic law, the lawful King of France. But the Catholic nobles and gentlemen who had followed Henry of Valois fell away, Navarre's forces dwindled, and Paris and the cause were for the moment safe.

The Duc de Mayenne was created commander-in-chief of the League, but his military abilities were no match for those of Henry of Navarre; the Battle of Arques was lost, then the Battle of Ivry (March 14, 1590), but Paris held out. To paraphrase the song: the Duke's body lay mouldering in the ground, but his soul went marching on, and his cause triumphed. Henry of Navarre saw that he must yield. On June sixteenth, 1593, he wrote to Gabrielle d'Estrées that "his love had never been greater, nor his passion more violent." On the twenty-third "he kissed her feet a million times"; on the twenty-sixth, "her hands a million times." On July twelfth he sent her a million more kisses. On the twenty-third he wrote her, "This morning I am to begin to converse with the bishops . . . and on Sunday *Je ferai le saut périlleux* [I shall take the perilous leap] . . . I kiss a thousand times my Angel's beautiful hands." On July twenty-fifth, the Archbishop of Bourges sat on an episcopal throne at the portal of the Basilica of Saint-Denis. A man presented himself: "Who are you?" "I am the King." "What do you want?" "I ask to be received into the Communion of the Catholic Church, Apostolic and Roman." The King knelt and swore to live and die in the Catholic Church. And France was free to follow her Latin destiny and develop her genius in the sympathetic atmosphere of the traditional Church.

Gradually the great and less among the intransigent Leaguers came in and made submission. The Duc de Mayenne, now grown to be a fat, heavy man, and troubled with sciatica, met the King in the park of the château of Montceaux, and was received kindly. The King, always in vigorous, athletic condition, walked him to and fro at a very brisk pace. At last the poor Duke, hot, flushed, perspiring and suffering, said he could go no more. "All right, Cousin, give me your hand," the King laughed, "for, by the Lord, that is all the revenge you will ever receive from me." The young Duc de Guise, Charles, surrendered Reims, and attempted to make a speech on meeting the King. Henry laughed. "You are not much more of an orator than I. I know what you want to say. One word can do it. We are all liable to youthful faults. I forget it all; only don't do it again. You shall acknowledge that I am the King, and I will be a father to you. There is no man in my court on whom I shall look with more favor than you."

This young man, the fourth Duc de Guise, died in 1640, after a comparatively uneventful life, when the great Cardinal Richelieu was in power. His son Henri, the fifth Duke, was romantic enough to claim the crown of Naples, spent four years in prison and died in 1664, in the early reign of Louis XIV, and the title descended to his nephew Louis-Joseph, the sixth Duke, who died in 1671. Soon afterwards his son Francis-Joseph, the seventh and last Duc de Guise, still but a little child, died in 1675. So ended the House of Guise.

The title, now vested in the Bourbon-Orléans family, is borne by the claimant to the Crown of France.

THE END



## **APPENDIX**



## APPENDIX

### A

THE name Guise is pronounced almost universally in this country, and also in France, as if it were spelt *Geeze*, giving the letters English sounds, *Ghize*, in French sounds. It should be pronounced *Gweeze*, English sounds, *Ghu-i-ze*, French sounds. This is known to encyclopædists, to a few professors, at the Sorbonne, at Grenoble, Harvard and the University of Toronto, and, also, I am told, to those who have the privilege of acquaintance with the present Duc de Guise, a member of the Bourbon-Orléans family, claimant to the Throne of France, in all about two or three dozen people.

### B

## CHRONOLOGY

1494	Birth of François Premier	died 1547
1496	Birth of Claude de Guise	died 1550
1498	Birth of Jean, Cardinal of Lorraine	died 1550
1505	Birth of Goudimel, musician	died 1572
1510	Birth of Pierre Lescot, architect	died 1571
1510?	Birth of Bernard Palissy, potter	died 1589
1510?	Birth of François Clouet, painter	died 1572
1515	Birth of Jean Goujon, sculptor	died ?1566
1515	Birth of Jean Bullant, architect	died 1578
1515	Birth of Philibert Delorme, architect	died 1570
1515	Victory of Marignano	
1517	Martin Luther posted his thesis	
1519	Birth of Henry II	died 1559
1519	Birth of François de Guise	died 1563
1519	Birth of Admiral Coligny	died 1572
1522	Birth of Joachim Du Bellay, poet	died 1560
1524	Birth of Ronsard, poet	died 1585
1525	Birth of Charles, Cardinal of Lorraine	died 1574

1525	Defeat of Pavia	
1528	Birth of Remy Belleau, poet	died 1577
1532	Birth of Jean-Antoine de Baïf, poet	died 1585
1533	Birth of Montaigne, essayist	died 1592
1533	Marriage of Henri and Catherine de Médicis	
1535	Birth of Germain Pilon, sculptor	died 1590
1544	Birth of François II	died 1560
1544	Death of Clément Marot, poet	
1547	Death of François Premier	
1547	Death of Henry VIII of England	
1550	Death of Claude de Guise	
1550	Death of Jean, Cardinal of Lorraine	
1550	Birth of Henry de Guise	died 1588
1550	Birth of Charles IX	died 1574
1551	Birth of Henri III	died 1589
1552	Defense of Metz by François de Guise	
1553	Death of Rabelais, author	
1553	Birth of Henry of Navarre	died 1610
1554	Birth of Duc de Mayenne	died 1611
1555	Abdication of Charles V, Emperor	
1557	Defeat at Saint-Quentin	
1558	Capture of Calais	
1559	Death of Henri II	
1559	Accession of François II	
1560	Conspiracy of Amboise	
1562	Massacre at Vassy	
1562	Battle of Dreux, Civil war	
1563	Death of François, Duc de Guise	
1567	Battle of Saint-Denis, Civil war, and death of Montmorency	
1569	Battle of Jarnac, Civil war, and death of Prince de Condé	
1569	Siege of Poitiers, Civil war	
1569	Battle of Moncontour, Civil war	
1572	Saint Bartholomew's Day, August 23	
1574	Death of Charles IX	
1576	Formation of The League	
1584	Death of Alençon	
1588	The Barricades (May)	
1588	Murder of Henri de Guise (December)	
1588	Murder of Charles, Cardinal of Lorraine (December)	
1589	Death of Catherine de Médicis (January)	

- 1589 Murder of Henri III (August)  
 1593 Conversion of Henri IV  
 1611 Death of Mayenne  
 1640 Death of Charles, 4th Duc de Guise  
 1664 Death of Henri, 5th Duc de Guise  
 1671 Death of Louis-Joseph, 6th Duc de Guise  
 1675 Death of François-Joseph, 7th and last Duc de Guise

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